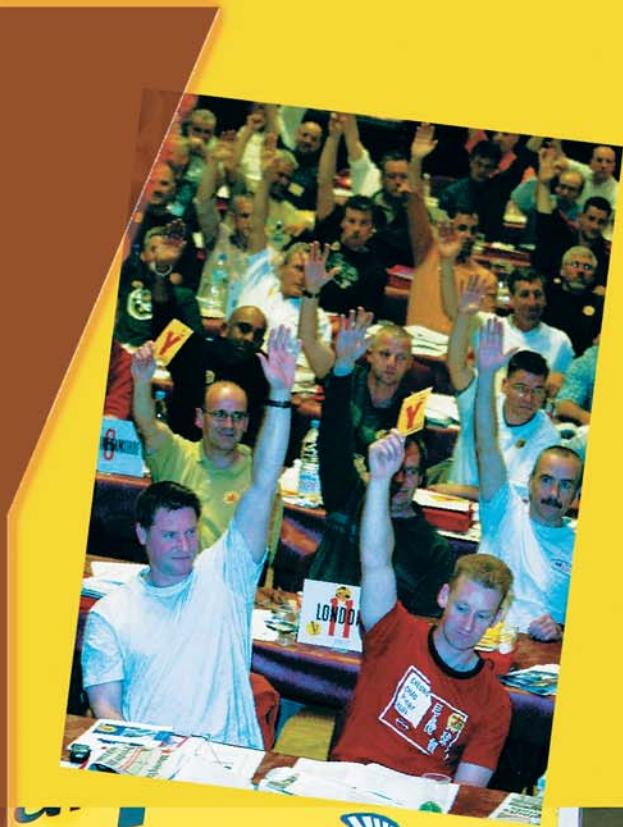
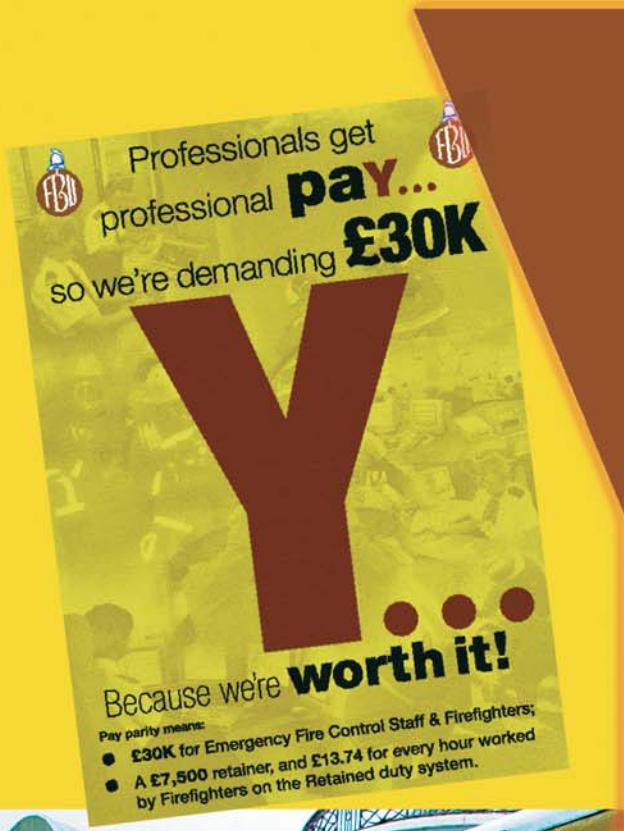




# FIREFIGHTER

Volume 30 No. 3 June 2002



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## GENERAL SECRETARY

# PUSH ON FOR PAY VICTORY

ON THE 28 May I presented the union's 2002 pay claim to the National Joint Council for the Fire Service. For those who have been away on another planet or otherwise engaged for whatever reason, let me reinstate our main demands in summary form:

- £30 000 per annum basic rate for a qualified firefighter
- equal pay for emergency fire control room staff
- £7,500 per annum retainer and £13.74 for every hour worked for firefighters working the retained duty system
- a revised Pay Formula which links firefighters future salaries to those of professionally qualified workers with high levels of responsibility

This is our most important campaign since the Pay Formula was first established over 20 years ago. With the unanimous backing of Annual Conference and literally hundreds of branch resolutions, the Executive Council are seeking to achieve a ground breaking agreement by November 2002. We seek to establish a fair rate for the job and a modernised Pay Formula to ensure that future earnings for firefighters and emergency fire control staff keep pace with workers in other industries and services with comparable levels of responsibility, skill and training.

The first responses from the employer's side have been mildly encouraging. There is, I believe, a widespread understanding throughout the Fire Service that the job has changed and the skill levels required by a modern firefighter are now much broader. As an acting Chief Fire Officer put it to me in recent letter ".....the commitment and enthusiasm of firefighters in taking on board new and demanding roles has led to the current situation where the current pay formula does not appear to meet the demands of a modern fire and rescue service."



# FIREFIGHTER

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So at least both sides recognise that there is a gap to be bridged and that the union has presented a strong and responsible case to back your claim. The employers are however pointing to the costs of the claim and arguing that the government will have to be involved to provide special funding and increased investment. They are already linking our claim to their modernisation agenda arguing that the government will not invest unless there is an improvement in service provision.

Let me make our position absolutely clear. We would very much welcome a joint Employer / FBU approach to government to make the case for a substantial increase in financial support for the Fire Service. For us modernisation means better training, better equipment, higher staffing levels and more investment in fire prevention work including research. And it means a new funding regime for the Service which better recognises and rewards the range of duties undertaken and the wider savings made available by improved fire prevention and special service provision. It is time that the politicians recognised that the investment levels required will not come cheap but that investment now will save the country billions by reducing injury and loss of life and property in the future.

Above all modernisation requires a complete reshaping of pay. The Fire Cover Review exercise carried out by the CFBAC Task Group is soon to report on the implications of a risk based system

of emergency cover. We don't know what the final report will say but we do know what the Brigade based Pathfinder Trials revealed. To provide a modernised service based on state of the art risk assessment techniques the Task Group estimates that staffing levels will need to double and budgets increase by some 140%. No doubt the final report will attempt to camouflage these findings but never again will it be possible to deny that the current Fire Service is massively understaffed and underfunded.

The biggest single factor in improving fire cover is staff numbers and training levels. A modernised service will need to recruit and retain and to adequately train a highly motivated workforce. The main problem with the current arrangement is not poverty pay – it is inadequate pay and a pay system which simply fails to reflect the value of professional firefighters and emergency fire control staff to the communities they serve. This is a responsible, highly skilled and sometimes dangerous job requiring continuous training and dedication to public service.

In recent years the politicians have got a first class service for third class wages. Unless this changes Fire Authorities will not be able to recruit and retain motivated staff in sufficient numbers to provide a modern Fire Service constantly improving service levels to the public.

This is what we are for. But let's be clear what we are against. Modernisation for us does not mean flexible pay determined by local labour market conditions, neither does it mean that firefighters become under trained paramedics. Or that the Emergency Services share common control rooms – we've recently seen how this can militate against public safety in the Cleveland fiasco. Nor does modernisation mean re-negotiating conditions of service, or opening up recruitment to senior positions to non uniform staff without relevant experience or training.

We go into a summer of negotiations, arguably the most important in the union's history. We are seeking a fair settlement of our just demands. Much depends now on you, the members. Make it clear to local councillors, MPs, local press, radio and TV stations that you mean business and that your claim is both fair and responsible. Let's campaign like never before to create the conditions where it becomes possible to win a great victory for the Fire Service and the public we serve. For a modern first class service demands that firefighters are fairly paid and that future salaries are linked to relevant comparators in other industries and services.

**ANDY GILCHRIST**  
General Secretary



F B U C O N F I D E N T I A L F R E E P H O N E H E L P L I N E

0 8 0 0 7 8 3 4 7 7 8

FAIRNESS AT WORK is about treating others as we would wish to be treated ourselves – with respect

## MORALE

# London Fire Service in explosive mood



**Neale Williams**  
ECG3 Secretary

IT'S OFFICIAL. Firefighters are brassed off! We feel "undervalued, bitter and resentful" so says a £38k report commissioned by London Fire Brigade management into the attitudes of firefighters.

Management tried to bury it. They described the report as "highly critical and potentially very destructive" and "not one that we would wish to publish". Not surprising given firefighters' complaints that we face a "dictatorial" management and rat-infested stations. But the truth will out and management are on the defensive.

The truth is many of us have felt brassed off for years, but this report shows how deep and widespread that anger is. Even station commanders have had enough. Firefighters' morale is

absolutely rock bottom and there's no mistaking why. Our service has been cut, our workloads increased and our wages frozen and forced down. On top of this we face continual job losses under Best Value, privatisation and an increase in deaths by fire.

No wonder the report described the feedback from firefighters as "deeply negative" and "cynical".

London Region FBU has produced a "special" newsletter with details of the report and management's botched attempt to suppress it. This is going down a storm inside of stations and fuelling rank and file calls for a fightback.

FBU Rep 'G' describes the mood inside his station as "acid". He said, "we're ready to walk out the doors now.

'G', a firefighter with a wife and two small children, explains why. "I joined this job to serve the public; I'm proud to be a firefighter but can't make ends meet. I recently enquired about a job as a train driver. I thought they might be surprised that a serving firefighter wanted a train driver's job, but they said they'd had lots of calls from firefighters."

Low pay, low morale and a never ending series of attacks by the Tories and New Labour have combined to make an explosive situation in London's Fire Service. It feels like the 70s in the run up to the national firefighters strike in 1977. Then, as now, pay was the spark that led to action. Will history repeat itself?

## PFI: its logical conclusion.



# 5th COLUMN

## IF IT'S GOOD ENOUGH FOR THEM ...

Members of the Scottish Parliament have voted to accept a massive 13.5% pay rise.

The pay proposal by the Senior Salaries Review Body has linked MSPs' salaries to 87.5% of their Westminster colleagues, giving them a pay formula for the future.

Police officers are currently being asked to accept 6 to 7% whilst Firefighters and Nurses were recently awarded less than 4%.

The focus for us is correct – an improved Pay Formula to keep us at a level of pay commensurate with the value for the job we do and the pay we deserve.

I am sure the Scottish Parliament will give full support to our cause.

**Write to THE FIFTH COLUMN, c/o The Editor, The Firefighter, Fire Brigades Union, Bradley House, 68 Coombe Road, Kingston upon Thames, Surrey, KT2 7AE**

## RETAINED FIREFIGHTERS

# RFU: setting the record straight



**M. Newland**  
Region 13 Firefighter Rep.

WE NORMALLY wouldn't get drawn into wasting valuable time replying to the misinformation that is constantly circulated by the RFU, time that we could spend on more meaningful work representing the Retained members in this region. This time though we feel strongly that the sort of rubbish that organisation is circulating needs to be exposed for what it is, misinformation, and in an effort to set the record straight we have decided to write this letter to all Retained stations in region 13, so that RFU members will have an opportunity to hear the truth, instead of the distortions that are peddled by their own union.

The type of misinformation we refer to is contained within the latest issue of what it seems is all that RFU members receive for

their quarterly contribution of £18.85, a newsletter entitled "Modernising the Fire Service, is the Retained the Weakest Link". These monthly newsletters seem to carry variations of the same old leaky arguments month after month. At £18.85, we think you will agree that it is a pretty expensive way to have jibes at the only union that is delivering daily, the Fire Brigades Union.

Isn't it ironic that most of the RFU's Policies are those which our employers most desire, such as destruction of the Grey Book, Fire-fighters undertaking Ambulance duties and half hearted support for Retained inclusion in the Firemen's Pension Scheme. It is an indicator of how "Retained friendly" RFU policies are, when most of them could be seen on any Chief Fire Officer's wish list.

If we may indulge ourselves for a moment, we challenge anyone to show us where the Fire Brigades Union is doing anything other than sterling work on your behalf. You only have to look at our record on issues such as Discipline, Pensions and Pension Appeals, Recruitment, Health and Safety and the Leave Scheme to name but a few. Our record speaks for itself and shows that we are continually delivering change for all our members, without spouting off in any self-promoting monthly newsletter.

Let us again state categorically, the RFU are not and will not be recognised by any Brigade within the British Fire Service for nego-  
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## RETAINED FIREFIGHTERS

# MEETINGS A SUCCESS



**Barry Foster**  
**Brigade Secretary**  
**Lincolnshire**

THE Lincolnshire Brigade Committee is more than pleased to announce the success of our two recent Brigade Retained meetings. The first meeting took place at Sleaford Fire Station in the south of the county and was very well attended, as was the meeting held on the following evening at Louth Fire Station in the north of the county.

Without doubt, the numbers at the meetings were swelled by the attendance of Brother Morris Butterfield, our recently elected Retained Executive Council member, as well as a whole host of Regional and Brigade Officials.

Following opening addresses from the Brigade Secretary and Morris, there was the customary minute or so of foot shuffling and polite coughing before the question was asked. Then the meeting really took hold and it was a delight to be part of a

lively and passionate debate that covered a whole host of subjects. Questions, comments and rallying cries came thick and fast from the floor as Morris and the others responded to everything sent their way. With issues ranging from the Pay Campaign to Co-responders and Conditions of Service to crewing levels, the questions certainly kept us all on our toes! Indeed, not only did no question go unanswered, but some got responses from three or four Officials!

As with any meeting, there was a lot of time and effort spent organising it around everyone's diaries etc, but it was all very much worthwhile when as the meeting draws to a close, you realise that in front of you are newly invigorated members ready and willing to get out there and fight for their rights.

As a bonus we even managed to increase the number of Retained members and get invites to some mainly RFU stations in order to spread the word! So it was a success in every sense.

Our sincere thanks must go out to the following people:

- All our Retained members who made the effort to attend.
- Morris Butterfield – Retained Executive Council Member.
- Steve Reeve – Region 6 Retained National Committee Rep.
- Steve Rumbelow – Bro. Reeve's able assistant.
- Dave Green – Region 6 Executive Council Member.
- Janine Curry – Region 6 Treasurer.
- Dave Limer – Region 6 Secretary.

Thanks also to anyone I've forgotten to mention!

### FROM PREVIOUS PAGE

tiation purposes, in fact the law does not allow Brigades to negotiate with them. The RFU continually throw up a smoke-screen by saying they have consultative rights. Any of our next-door neighbours could set up a consultative meeting with a Chief Office as a ratepayer, but they won't negotiate with him on our conditions of service.

The first paragraph of the latest RFU newsletter starts off by saying how grateful they are that the Merseyside dispute didn't turn into a National Strike. Then they go on to say that the underlying reason for disputes like Merseyside is because, and we quote "we in the Fire Service are the last bastion of resistance to modern working practices" and that the "Grey Book" is out of date. We would not be alone within the Fire Brigades Union in saying that the "Grey Book" needs updating to our advantage, but it sends shivers down our spines to think of what would become of the "Grey Book" if the RFU were in charge of its destiny.

If you were to believe the RFU you would think that the Fire Brigades Union went looking for the Merseyside dispute. The truth is that a trade dispute arose in Merseyside, because CFO

Saunders was prepared to recruit civilian managers into uniformed posts, in the first instance as ADOs.

Having exhausted the dispute resolution procedures, locally and nationally, our members in Merseyside were left with no other option to stop that ridiculous situation, other than to withdraw their labour. Mark our words, if Saunders had got away with that in Merseyside, there is no doubt, Fire Authorities up and down the country would have been doing the same and worse. Instead of criticising our colleagues in Merseyside the RFU should be congratulating them on their principled and vindicated stance against a tyrant.

Strike action is in no one's interest, least of all ours, but we don't see any other way to stop people like Malcolm Saunders, when you have exhausted due process other than to exercise your right to withdraw your labour.

The RFU are continually describing themselves as "True Community Firefighters". Well we have news for them. Ourselves and the other Retained members of the Fire Brigades Union (Approx 90% of Retained Fire-fighters are members of the FBU) are also community Firefighters, the only difference is, we are prepared to stand alongside our Wholetime, Officer and

Emergency Fire Control Room colleagues to protect and improve the hard won conditions we currently enjoy.

The RFU say they have a no-strike policy, well that's all well in theory, but can you realistically envisage stopping people like CFO Saunders or your own Chief Officer from walking all over you when they would know that ultimately you are a toothless tiger. Strike action may seem unpalatable to a lot of people, but the reality is that it is by having that option that gives us strength as a negotiating team.

The second paragraph of the RFU newsletter headed, "Resistance to change is damaging the Retained" tells us that we are seeing, and we quote "a partial and potentially damaging modernisation of retained conditions of service through a process of legal challenges and tribunals based on changes in European law." This obviously refers to the moves by the Fire Brigades Union to have paid holiday leave and a proper pension for our retained members. Could someone please explain to us what the RFU's logic is in making those comments, when they know as well as we do, that the Fire Brigades Union have exhausted the negotiation process on pensions and have had no choice but to instigate legal action against the National Employers. The main difference between our legal challenge on pensions and their misguided action in 1984 when they lost in the House of Lords, is that we have taken the very best advice available, not jumped in with both feet only to set the process back for almost twenty years.

The next two paragraphs blame the Fire Brigades Union for doing nothing in situations in other Brigades where Fire Authorities have decided to upgrade the cover to Wholetime. We all know that no matter how quick we as a Retained crew can turn out to a fire call, Wholetime crews have the advantage of being on station already and so will naturally get to the call before us. Can you imagine any union, no matter how strong, winning the argument with the public that they should have to wait about three minutes longer for a Retained crew when the local authority is prepared to provide Wholetime cover. The Fire Brigades Union has learned from experience over the years that disputes can only be won with the support of the public and any disputes that the Fire Brigades Union have run, have ultimately been in the long term

interest of the public.

In a section entitled "The RFU's Vision of the Future Retained": they want Retained Stations to become an integral part of the community, no problem with that, we should think the vast majority already are part of the community.

The community aspect is no problem but they also want something else, and that is the Fire Service to become more involved in non-fire emergencies. Now at first glance you may think that means more special service calls, well you would be wrong. What that is code for is in line with RFU policy, and that is for the Fire Service to start becoming involved in First Responding or Co-responding.

First Responding or Co-responding means firefighters undertaking Ambulance Service Duties and with that, we in the Fire Brigades Union have a big problem.

With First Responding or Co-responding come some very complex issues, some of which are:

- Will the Government downgrade the Ambulance Service even further if we start undertaking Ambulance duties?
- Are there personal liability issues for Firefighters becoming involved in medical treatment beyond first aid? This has already been seen within the Health Service, with individual health care professionals becoming subject to claims of medical negligence.
- There are serious training implications, when we are already struggling to keep up with our Fire Service Training.
- Slippery slope to Control Room mergers, which definitely would not be in the Fire Service interest.

Finally and we think most importantly, who is going to put the fires out while we are out dealing with, for example, a collapsed drunk?

What the RFU should be doing is asking why the Ambulance Service cannot be resourced properly instead of using the Fire Brigade as a sticky plaster, eventually overstretching it and ending up with two sick patients, pardon the pun!

We will answer the question posed by the title of the latest RFU newsletter by saying, no the Retained are not the weakest link, but Retained fire-fighters who are foolish enough to pay

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**We will answer the question posed by the title of the latest RFU newsletter by saying, no the Retained are not the weakest link, but Retained fire-fighters who are foolish enough to pay monthly subscriptions to the RFU for the sort of non-representation that organisation provides, are certainly making themselves the weakest link.**

## RETAINED FIREFIGHTERS

### FROM PREVIOUS PAGE

monthly subscriptions to the RFU for the sort of non-representation that organisation provides, are certainly making themselves the weakest link.

If you are an RFU member reading this newsletter, we pose the following questions to you.

1. What democratic influence do you have, if any, over the decision making process within your Union?
2. What system of accountability do you have over your leaders, in particular the most senior non-elected Official, Mr. Chadbon?
3. Why should you pay subscriptions of £18.85 per quarter to a Union that will never be able to negotiate properly on your behalf, when you would only pay approximately £3.50 more to get our membership benefits as well as a proper democratic say on the path we take in negotiations with management on your behalf anyway?
4. What financial assistance will your Union provide you with in the event of injury on duty? Incidentally the Fire Brigades Union, 'Accident and Injury Fund' will pay FBU members approximately £27.00 per week.
5. Will your Union pay approximately £14,500 to your nominated benefactor in the event of your death while a member, whether on or off duty?
6. What are the motivations of people in senior positions in your Union who are no longer involved with the Fire Service?
7. Where are your Union's policies on:
  - Health and Safety
  - Wholetime/Retained Duties and First Responders, all things that management want, not for our benefit but theirs.
  - Defence of the 'Grey Handbook'

To any RFU members reading this we say, time to waken up and smell the roses. Colleagues, join the Fire Brigades Union and get proper representation! Organise a meeting on your station and we will come along and persuade you of the benefits of being a member of a proper union: the Fire Brigades Union.

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## 2002 WOMEN'S SCHOOL

# Victims of our own success

THE 2002 Women's School appeared to come round all too quickly for the National Women's Committee. It seemed that we had just started on the tasks left with us from the previous year when another huge workload was about to be dropped on our heads from all the fantastically enthusiastic and progressive women in Brigades throughout Britain! How wrong could we have been ... to dread it I mean!

You've heard the one about being victims of your own success, well this year the National Women's Committee seemed to surpass themselves with the content, quality and 'enjoyability' of an event. And that was just the committee, the feedback from students' questionnaires at the close of the school was even better!

The School was, as in previous years held in Wortley Hall, near Sheffield, over the weekend of 'International Women's Day.' Wortley Hall being the 'Workers' stately home' and luckily for the FBU, we had it all to ourselves.

The agenda for the school was one of the most diverse, women specific, internationally involved and successful that we have seen in years. There were speakers from 'The friends of Palestine' holding a debating session on the current crisis in the Middle East informing students about the history, events and present situation not forgetting what we, the FBU have done in years gone by to get involved and also what members, branches and the Union nationally can continue to do to help for the establishment of an Independent Palestinian State.

We had a Colombian Speaker, Berenice Celeyta, the Head of the Human Rights Department of sintraemcali who, through her translator, told us about the atrocities taking place today in Colombia - 'the most dangerous place in the world to be a trade union activist.'

She told us about how 3,500 trade union and human rights activists have been murdered in the last 10 years, with not one prosecution for one single death. These murders being carried out against working men and women for challenging the

consuming regime of capitalism, reducing workers' rights and in fact the human rights of the people of Colombia.

We had a presentation of the film that the TV companies refused to show 'Injustice'. Input and information about the United Families and Friends Campaign. A group of the family members of young Black men and women who have died in custody at the hands of the British Justice system, yet are still fighting for justice and an end to Police brutality in Britain. From this session a resolution was passed to support the campaign and for us to affiliate to UFEC.

Along with the International thread, we had sessions on improving our National Maternity guidelines, Health and Safety, understanding our pension scheme, campaigning (a useful workshop looking at the forthcoming PAY CAMPAIGN!!) Advanced Fairness at Work and our internal union policies and procedures surrounding the issues.

Input from the General Secretary was our opening session on the Pay Campaign and the Pay Formula, discussing the increasing workload, technicality, complexity and intensity of the roles of

## We look forward to seeing everyone at next year's school, remembering that it's the students that make it so successful

our members in the workplace. We discussed the immeasurable differences now reflected in our jobs, that have crept in over the last 30 years with no reflection within the outdated pay formula being used to calculate our worth.

This session left our women members looking forward to Annual Conference's debate over pay, (the Wednesday of Conference week) safe in the knowledge that the Fire Brigades Union has recognised the need to strive for a more reflective pay formula.

REFLECTIVE OF OUR WORTH, NOT WHAT EMPLOYERS THINK WE ARE WORTH, OR THINK THEY CAN GET AWAY WITH PAYING US!!!!

The Audit Commission, a force external to the Fire Service stated that we are a 'Phenomenally high performing service' this was nothing the FBU didn't know, we are now simply insisting on some recognition of this within our standards of living.

With that, we look forward to seeing everyone at next year's school, remembering that it's the students that make it so successful, so a big thank you to all those who organised, attended and supported us this year.

**Vicky Knight, National Women's Committee**

# Fire Brigades Union Gay & Lesbian Support Group

[www.fbu.org.uk/sections/ngl.html](http://www.fbu.org.uk/sections/ngl.html)



email us at:  
[gal01@fbu-ho.org.uk](mailto:gal01@fbu-ho.org.uk)

write to: NGLC  
(national gay and lesbian committee)  
PO Box 10555  
London N1 8XT

Phone: 0800 7834778

The trade union movement represents ALL working people, regardless of their sex, race, religious belief, sexuality or disability.

All FBU members are entitled to the full rights and benefits of Union membership. The FBU believes in Fairness at Work for everyone and is committed to the elimination of all forms of discrimination, both at work and within the community.

The group was set up by gay and lesbian firefighters and control staff who are 'out' in the workplace and felt they were in a position to help others within the UK fire service. Within the groups five year existence, we have achieved official recognition with the FBU, as well as representing the FBU in forums which were once untouched. We also have an extensive network to support and advise gay, lesbian and bisexual members who may feel isolated or harassed.

The group is run on a strictly confidential basis and accepts the rules, constitution and democracy of the Fire Brigades Union.

### Our main aims are:

- ★ Ensuring gay and lesbian members have a voice within the FBU, and making sure we are not left out in equality issues at Brigade, Regional and National level.
- ★ Providing support to gay, lesbian and bisexual members in ALL regions of the FBU.
- ★ Identifying and dealing with any issues/problems faced by our members.
- ★ Providing members with the opportunity to talk/meet with other members.
- ★ Distribute information concerning gay and lesbian issues to members.

Any gay, lesbian or bisexual FBU member contacting the group will only be dealt with by a group member. All information will be protected and NOT made available to any official unless the member gives his/her permission.



0800 783 4778 0800 783 4778 0800 783 4778

## HEALTH AND SAFETY

# Bodymapping: it's simple, and it works



**Paul Matthewman**  
**Health, Safety &**  
**Welfare Co-ordinator**  
**No 4 Region**

THE annual school for Health & Safety in No 4 Region was arranged over two days in December 2001, in a very cold, rainy Hull in Humberside.

The main theme for the school was:

“Tackling Ill Health in the UK Fire Service”

The school started with our regional Tutor Trevor Cave giving an introduction on the course aims, which were to help us to:

- Find out how ill health is identified in our workplace
- Get up to date on the HSC's occupational health strategy
- Use new techniques to involve members in the process of identifying ill health and its causes
- Tackle priority problems to prevent ill health

As regards using new techniques, the issue of 'body mapping' was discussed, something that we had not come across before in the FBU.

During the course it was agreed to use region 4 as a national pilot (at the request of Dave Patton, National Officer for Health & Safety), we would test the method by conducting body mapping exercises in each Brigade represented on the course, which was South Yorkshire, West Yorkshire, North Yorkshire & Humberside, we would then review the data gathered in order to determine future strategy & action.

What is "Body Mapping" you ask? Don't worry, we asked the same question.

The issue of "Mapping" is a relatively new concept to the Trade Union Movement with the UK. The technique was developed by Unions in North America and very quickly recog-

nised as a new method of identifying and more importantly preventing ill health at work.

One of the key functions of FBU Health Safety & Welfare Representatives elected under the Safety Representatives and Safety Committee Regulations is to investigate potential hazards. They are also entitled to talk with the members they represent in order to identify any concerns they may have.

Sometimes it can be difficult to establish the link between the work our members do and their health. People may not report certain symptoms to management because they fear for their job, especially when the Brigade management style is "macho" and aggressive leading to a poor industrial relations climate.

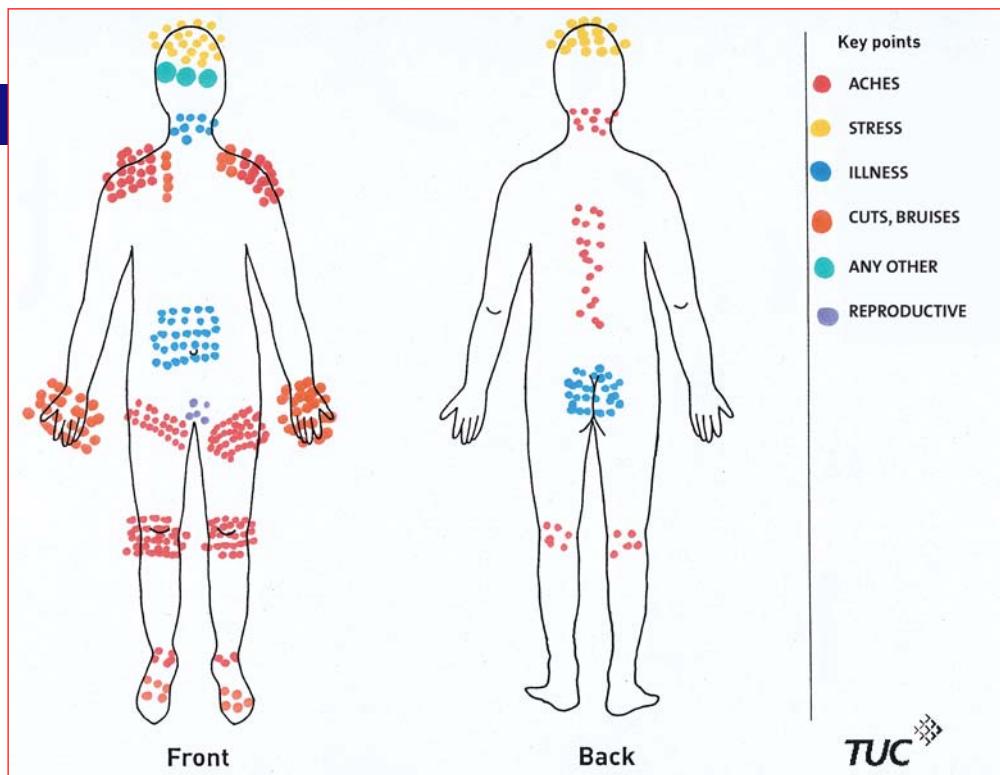
Individuals may blame their symptoms on getting older or being unfit, without realising that others are being affected as well. People may just accept symptoms as "Part of the job" without realising that they could develop safer and healthier ways of working if they put their heads together and think about it.

**The commonest work-related health problems – musculoskeletal disorders, stress – can have non-work causes too. Separating effects that are work-related from general wear and tear can be difficult. We're always developing new tools to help us with the job of being a Safety rep. A few years ago how many of us had heard of the Internet?**

Body mapping has got the potential to identify all sorts of ill health complaints that have not been identified before; any technique that helps members to talk about health & safety at work is useful.

Ten years ago people were reluctant to talk about stress, not anymore because awareness has been raised, it's part of a reps job to build confidence and be sensitive to issues, as with all sensitive trade union topics, confidentiality must be assured. Discomfort and stiffness are often the first symptoms, how much better it would be if we could stop these problems at an earlier stage by being proactive, let's negotiate over the issue of bringing in professionals, but if we had left RSI to the professionals it would still be unrecognised.

You only have to think about asbestos to realise that conventional methods of research into occupational health have never



protected workers, at least body mapping gives safety reps and their members the chance to prevent ill health before it's too late.

The principle behind Body Mapping is very simple.

The body map is a chart showing the front and back view of a body. Using coloured pens or stickers, workers doing a particular type of job are encouraged to mark on the chart where they suffer pain or injury while they are working.

Different coloured pens or stickers can be issued to identify different problems, using the following examples:

1. **RED** for aches, soreness and pains. (Headaches, muscular skeletal etc).
2. **ORANGE** for cuts and bruises.
3. **BLUE** for illnesses (stomach upset, dermatitis, etc).
4. **YELLOW** for stress.
5. **PURPLE** for reproductive problems.
6. **GREEN** for any other problems. (Visual, hearing, sore throats etc).

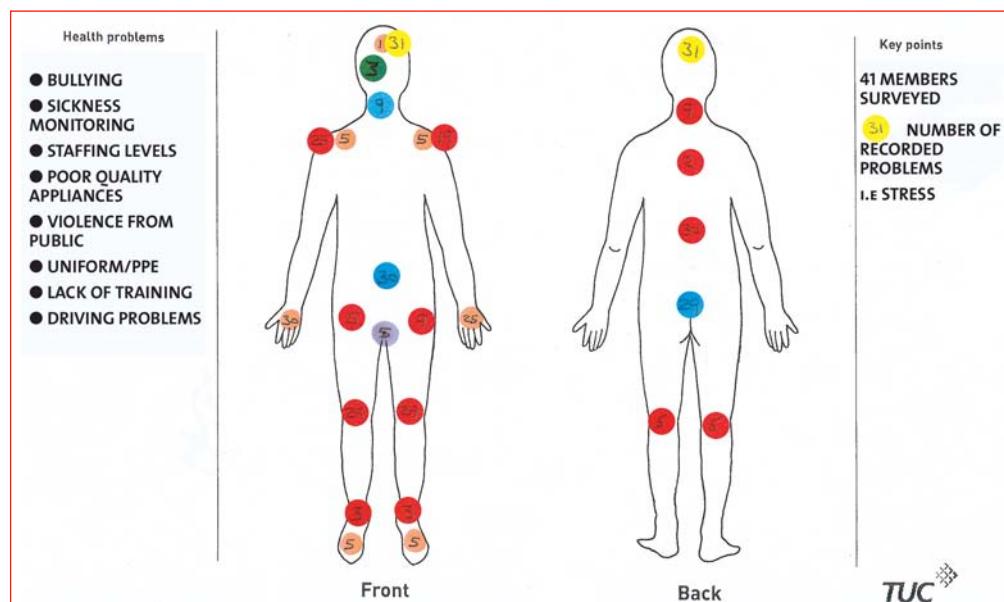
At the end of the exercise it should be possible to identify any

significant problems. By putting all the comments and marks on to one chart, clear clusters may emerge showing that many people doing the same job are suffering similar symptoms. This evidence, along with suggested causes and solutions from the members, can be taken to the employer – e.g. at a safety committee meeting.

The initial response from the Safety Reps on the course was one of scepticism to say the least, after trying the exercise in groups and of course reporting back on a flip chart" the attitude was beginning to change and the Reps could see the positive benefits in the exercise, even among the Safety Reps present on the course clear patterns and clusters were evident.

By the end of the two days the Reps were eager to get back to their Brigades and start the exercise with the members on stations and the Control rooms,

We drafted a regional policy document for the Reps to work from, so the process of body mapping would follow the same format in each Brigade, the Reps were given exactly one month to



# HEALTH AND SAFETY

complete a cross section of members within their respective areas and then report back.

When the Reps arrived at regional office on the 23rd January 2002 myself and Trevor Cave were very apprehensive, mainly because we didn't know what results the Reps would come with, or even if the exercise had been a total disaster. We were very surprised with reports. Generally the members that had taken part were very happy too. They saw it as "the FBU being pro-active and not re-active" some of the results that came forward clearly identified clusters and patterns and certainly gave the Reps plenty of information to work with.

After all the results had been analysed we then moved on to the next phase of the programme, which was "Hazard Mapping"

What Is Hazard Mapping you ask?

Following a body mapping activity with the same members, we can use more mapping techniques to investigate the problems further. The technique is called Hazard Mapping, which should help to identify and prioritise hazards, a rough map of the workplace is used to highlight where problems are found, like body mapping, hazard mapping gives a much more visual picture than statistics from surveys etc.

## WHAT IS NEEDED

- A simple plan/map of the workplace on a large piece of paper, you can check with your members to see if anything needs to be added, if your members move around in their jobs, the plan should try to illustrate this. It is recommended that for this exercise it is restricted to the Fire station/Control room/Headquarters, as the fireground would be almost impossible to map.
- The results of the Body Mapping exercise
- 'Postit' stickers/coloured pens so that members can mark hazards on the map
- Members from a particular work area gather together and are given an explanation of what you are proposing to do.
- Members are now asked to pinpoint hazards (using 'Postit' notes, pens) on the map/plan with an explanation of why they should be included.
- The plan should also include identification of where workers are situated.
- Each member should be asked to pick one priority health & safety concern by drawing a line to the hazard they are most concerned about, this should indicate which hazards need to be prioritised.
  - The FBU Safety Rep should keep notes of what members say around the hazard map.
  - The findings are then discussed with members. Common patterns can be identified; a lot of 'Postits' will show that there is likely to be a problem that needs to be tackled.
  - Links can be made to the symptoms of ill health from the results of body mapping.
- Members are given a chance to think about and influence priorities.

Examples of Hazards

- **Physical hazards** – noise, radiation, vibration, temperature etc.
- **Chemical hazards** – cleaning agents, solvents, diesel exhaust fumes etc.
- **Biological hazards** – infectious diseases, bacteria, needle sticks, body fluids etc.
- **Work design hazards** – ergonomic hazards, working alone, no procedure for dealing with potential violence etc.
- **Stress hazards** – workload, harassment, discrimination, shift work, long working hours etc.

Once the Safety Rep and members have identified the priorities, the causes, effects and actions can be discussed. Involve the members in discussion about hazards and ill health.

The activity is concluded by asking members to contribute to deciding:

- What is the cause
- What is the effect
- What can be done

Then a priority plan is used to decide on an initial issue to be tackled.

Again the Reps were sent away back to their Brigades to conduct the Hazard Mapping exercise, as last time they were given exactly one month to complete the exercise and return with the results.

The Reps arrived at Wortley Hall on the 25th February 2002 with the same positive attitude as before and some excellent demonstrations of "Hazard Mapping", all the results were then analysed and a clear strategy was formed for the safety reps to start approaching management with the results.

The members that took part in the hazard mapping exercise were again very positive and supportive of the Safety Reps, the Reps are at this point back in their Brigades tackling the issues with management and are due to report back on the July 2002.

It is very pleasing to see both Safety Reps and more importantly members enthused once again by Health & Safety issues in the workplace; in fact members from Stations that weren't involved in the exercise are contacting Reps to get those Stations involved.

If there is a serious Health & Safety problem in the Brigade, it is in management's interest to know about it. Apart from any legal duties they may have, it is likely to be costing them money, which would be better spent on other improvements we are asking for. Workers whose health is being damaged by their work will have more time off sick and will be less effective when they are in work.

It is also important to let our members who take part see the results of the exercise. If there are any improvements introduced following discussion with Brigade management, we need to make sure members are informed about them. We also will need to continue to monitor the situation with them and ensure that they really do work.

Because the pilot has been successful it is now planned to test the exercise in another Brigade before rolling the programme out nationally.

## NEWS UPDATE

## DIRECTORS' PAY

Twenty two directors at seven companies who earned over £500,000 last year are listed below. Top by a long way was Lord Browne of Madingley, the chief executive of oil multinational BP, who was on over £3 million last year. He was one of six BP executives to get over £1 million last year.

Director	Company	Pay £000	% rise
Lord Browne	BP	3,037	66.0
Lawrence Fish	Royal Bank of Scotland	2,213	n.a.
Matthew Barrett	Barclays	1,862	6.9
Fred Goodwin	Royal Bank of Scotland	1,572	n.a.
Doug Ford	BP	1,519	22.7
Rodney Chase	BP	1,418	24.2
Byron Grote	BP	1,294	n.a.
Dick Oliver	BP	1,192	24.1
John Buchanan	BP	1,150	13.7
Iain Robertson	Royal Bank of Scotland	1,114	n.a.
Gordon Pall	Royal Bank of Scotland	1,039	n.a.
John Varley	Barclays	797	19.8
Scott Bell	Standard Life	791	14.8
William Friedrich	BG	768	n.a.
Frank Chapman	BG	757	85.9
John Windeler	Alliance & Leicester	694	36.6
Fred Watt	Royal Bank of Scotland	690	n.a.
Norman Mccluskie	Royal Bank of Scotland	685	n.a.
Christopher Lendrum	Barclays	664	8.0
Peter Long	First choice	623	-5.2
Jim Stratton	Standard Life	576	16.1
Andrew Bonfield	BG	577	n.a.

For financial year ending December 2001

The biggest pay rise – 85.9% – went to Frank Chapman of gas group BG, reflecting his promotion to chief executive in November 2000. He edged Lord Browne who got a 66% rise.

Only one of the 22 got a pay cut – Peter Long, chief executive of holiday group First Choice. A smaller performance-related bonus in 2001 meant he took a 5.2% cut putting him on £623,000. His basic salary did, however, rise by 8.8%.

## POST OFFICE AXES 15,000 JOBS

Consignia (the Post Office), is to cut 15,000 jobs over three years. The layoffs come as part of a £1.2bn rescue package in which the loss-making Parcelforce Worldwide business will be scaled down.

Consignia anticipates saving £460 million from the first round of measures aimed at reversing daily losses of £1.5 million. From July, Parcelforce Worldwide will concentrate solely on the growing market for next-day and two-day express deliveries while abandoning its unprofitable three-day plus deliveries. The move will result in 6,700 Parcelforce staff from a total workforce of 11,700 people losing their jobs in the next two years.

Consignia chairman Allan Leighton describes the package as



JOHN HARRIS/REPORTDIGITAL.CO.UK

**Under threat: At work in the Consignia Parcel Force Royal Mail Coventry Hub distribution centre**

“common sense re-engineering” and says the firm is in a perilous position. But Unions condemned the cuts. Roger Lyons, Amicus General Secretary said: This announcement has come as a body-blow for the thousands of loyal workers in Consignia and we will work tirelessly to ensure that there are no compulsory redundancies.

“Consignia has taken a profitable company and with the implementation of a flawed business strategy has signed the death warrants for thousands of jobs.”

Billy Hayes, General Secretary of the Communication Workers’ Union, pledged he would not allow his members to be axed. “We’ve never countenanced people being sacked to restructure the industry and we would resist that by any means necessary,” he said. Although the first redundancies to be announced are voluntary, the next stage – involving the Royal Mail division – could include compulsory job losses.

## MSPs VOTE FOR BIG PAY RISE

Members of the Scottish Parliament (MSPs) have voted themselves a 15.5% rise to £48,228 from 1st April. The vote, which will be the last of its kind, followed recommendations from the Senior Salaries Review Body that MSPs’ pay should be pegged at 87.5% of the pay of their counterparts in Westminster.

Under the new pay structure, Jack McConnell, the Scottish First Minister, will see his salary rise to £118,000 and Cabinet Ministers will get almost £85,000.

There was opposition to the increase from the Scottish

## NEWS UPDATE

Socialist Party. Tommy Sheridan was the only MSP to vote for his motion to fix MSPs' salaries at £25,000 – the average for a skilled worker in Scotland. He said: "I don't think 95% of Scots should be paid less than politicians. I think we should be representing all of Scotland. That is why I think we should take the average of a skilled worker."

### UNPAID OVERTIME – £28bn

Over 5.5 million British workers now do unpaid overtime, averaging more than seven hours a week and representing more than £5,000 a year worth of free labour to their employer. The total value of unpaid overtime done by British workers is £28bn a year according to a TUC analysis of official figures – an increase of £5bn since the TUC's last analysis in September 2000. The TUC says the huge amount of unpaid overtime more than compensates employers for the exaggerated costs of introducing decent minimum standards of legal protection.

The number of people doing unpaid overtime has risen by over a quarter of a million to more than one in five workers (22%).

Women in professional occupations are the most likely to work unpaid overtime (57%), although men are slightly more likely to work unpaid overtime overall (23% compared with 21%). Overall, those in professional occupations are most likely to do unpaid overtime (51%) at an average of almost 9.5 hours a week, representing £7,316 a year.

TUC General Secretary, John Monks, said: "Employer organisations are always whingeing about the costs of what they call red tape, yet you never hear any gratitude for the vast amounts of unpaid overtime their staff put in."

'The truth is that when employers talk about the benefits of flexible labour markets, they mean stripping away terms and conditions, as many are now doing with occupational pensions. They point to the US as their preferred model, but people at work in the UK should be warned that on average annual leave is just 10 days in the US compared with 25 in the UK.'

"And of course, employers never count the benefits of treating staff well in their back of the envelope calculations."

	Number in group	Average hours of unpaid overtime per week	Value of unpaid overtime per year
1 Managers and Senior Officials	1,707,270	9.01	£7,051
2 Professional Occupations	1,436,806	9.48	£7,316
3 Associate Professional and Technical	1,035,775	5.37	£3,100
4 Administrative and Secretarial	568,378	4.47	£1,774
5 Skilled Trades & Occupations	196,334	5.44	£2,204
6 Personal Service Occupations	247,520	4.16	£1,313
7 Sales and Customer Service Occupations	154,339	4.03	£1,178
8 Process, Plant and Machine Operatives	100,390	5.25	£1,884
9 Elementary Occupations	91,896	4.31	£1,228
<b>Total</b>	<b>5,538,708</b>	<b>7.36</b>	<b>£5,057</b>

1 This is the annual value of unpaid overtime per member of occupational group who does unpaid overtime.

## NEWS FROM THE TUC

### Black and Asian workers suffer wage discrimination

THE TUC is calling on the Government to extend Britain's race relations laws to tackle a serious problem of low pay among some of the most vulnerable sections of the country's black and Asian workers. In a new report "Black and Underpaid" the TUC reveals that black and Asian male workers earn on average £97 per week less than their white counterparts.

The report shows alarming differences in pay within black and Asian communities. Pakistani and Bangladeshi men earn £150 per week less than white men, while the negative differential for Caribbean men is £115 and for Africans £116 per week. Black and Asian women fare better, and on average earn £7 per week more than white women – this is largely because they are more likely to be in full time jobs. However, Pakistani and Bangladeshi women remain, like their men, at the bottom earning on average £34 per week less than white women.

The TUC wants all employers in the private and voluntary sectors to be required to promote good race relations in their organisations. This is a legal duty at present placed only on the public sector. A further change in the law is called for by the TUC so that trade unions and the Commission for Racial Equality can take collective cases on behalf of individuals or groups of members.

Apart from direct racial discrimination, factors affecting pay include black and Asian workers being trapped in low paid jobs and economic sectors such as textiles; language problems, despite high educational achievement; and being concentrated in deprived areas of the country with a dependence on public transport.

John Monks TUC General Secretary, said: "New laws in the public sector will make a difference – these must now be extended to end the unfairness in pay for black and Asian workers. These workers already suffer twice the levels of unemployment, lack of promotion opportunities and racial harassment. Unions are seeking to work in partnership with employers and the Government to end this disadvantage."

#### Main findings in *Black and Underpaid*

- Despite nearly a generation of race relations legislation in Britain black workers continue to face inequality in pay.
- There is a diversity of experience within the black community some groups manage to do better than others.

#### AVERAGE WEEKLY EARNINGS IN BRITAIN £

	White	All Black	Caribbean	African	Pakistani/ Indian	Bangladeshi
Men	332	235	217	216	327	182
Women	180	187	210	199	194	146

- Black and Asian workers who are members of trade unions are far better off than their non-union counterparts. The hourly rate for black workers covered by collective bargaining is 3 per cent higher than for white workers.

## EUROPEAN WEEK FOR SAFETY AND HEALTH AT WORK 2002

ON 14 October, this year's European Week for Safety and Health at Work will begin. The theme for this year will be 'stress' and an information pack will be published by the HSE in May.

Mr. Peter Rimmer, the HSE's Director of Information says "Each year an increasing number of organisations are signing up

for the week in 2001, we had requests for over 10,000 action packs; nearly double that of the year before.

Feedback has shown that participants find the week enjoyable and rewarding. I would urge everyone, no matter how small their business, to get involved".

# Stressed? Tell your employer

THE Court of Appeal's overturning of three work-related stress cases in February was not a revolution. It did not, as some sections of the media crowed, mean the end of employees' rights to take their employers to court for causing psychological injury.

To some extent the court has clarified the law, which has been a minefield. But in others it has muddied the water on stress claims still further, while placing the onus on employees to complain or find a new job.

By setting out 16 'practical propositions' relevant in determining liability in stress claims, including an employers obligations, the court has put flesh on the bones of the existing approach.

The landmark case of John Walker, the director of social services at Northumberland County Council who settled in 1996 for £175,000, established that the basic principles of employers' liability apply i.e. duty of care, breach of duty, injury caused by the breach of duty and whether an injury is foreseeable.

Stress cases, the court said, require particular care in deciding because they give rise to the difficult issues of foreseeability and cause. In turn, deciding whether there has been a particular breach of duty that led to the psychiatric illness may prove difficult.

All of the defendants appealed on the basis that the original court rulings had set too low the trigger for when an employer has to take action. As a consequence, the respective courts had found the psychiatric injury to be foreseeable and that the employer was in breach of duty.

Another important aspect of the Court of Appeal ruling is that



it made clear there is a distinction between psychiatric ill health and occupational stress. A claimant cannot recover compensation for stress unless it develops into psychiatric ill health as a result of stress at work.

Some of the key propositions set out by the Court of Appeal were:

- An employer was entitled to assume that an employee can withstand the normal pressures of the job unless that person is known to be vulnerable. The employer is entitled to take what an employee says at face value.
- There are no occupations that should be regarded as intrinsically dangerous to mental health and to trigger a duty to take steps. The warning of impending harm to health must be plain enough for any reasonable employer to recognise.
- An employer need only take steps which are reasonable in all the circumstances and which are likely to do some good, but if

## HEALTH & SAFETY/STRESS

# FBU CONFIDENTIAL STRESS HELPLINE

**STRESS** is caused by anything that makes you tense, frustrated, angry or even sad. It could be unrelenting pressures and issues at work or personal problems within your private life such as moving house, marital difficulties or coping with a bereavement.

A certain amount of stress is good for us, especially when we have to face a challenge or carry out tasks we would rather not, as stress can help us to achieve the targets set. However, too much stress can affect both our physical and mental well being. If left unresolved, stress can have a very demoralising effect on our jobs and our social lives.

You should always try to remain optimistic and be confident that eventually you will beat the stress that has taken over your life. There are various effective and simple ways to help reduce stress; very often self-help methods are the most successful. One of the best methods is to talk through your problems. This may be with colleagues, family, friends or someone completely outside of the situation.

The Fire Brigades Union's Stress Helpline was set up in October 2000 to offer support to all Fire Service personnel who may be under pressure or suffering from stress. This may be either personal or work-related stress.

The Stress Helpline is staffed 24 hours a day, 365 days of the year by qualified nurses with additional counselling skills training.

This around the clock service enables members to telephone at such times when their stress levels are particularly high. Many people will call during the night, as that is when their problems seem to exacerbate and therefore prevents them from sleeping.

The majority of callers prefer to talk on the telephone, as this provides them with a completely confidential and

'faceless' service. Callers find this highly desirable, especially when their concerns are due to a work-related issue. They are continually reassured that any information discussed is held in complete confidence and is not passed on to the authorities. In fact, this is in line with the telephone counsellors' code of professional conduct and ethics.

Although the majority of callers have very good support from family and friends they often feel that this support network is being over-burdened or even becoming disinterested in listening to their problems. Therefore, members may ring in as often as they feel they need to and talk for as long as they wish. The length of the call is determined completely by the needs of the caller and no pressure is put upon them at any time to bring the call to a hasty and premature end.

Making that initial call to the helpline can and does take a great deal of courage on the part of the caller, as they may feel, in their own mind, anxious, unsure of what to expect, or in some way failing in their ability to cope.

However, although on the helpline we are unable to offer specific advice or tell people what action they should take, we are there to fully listen and support them. We may suggest and discuss various options that may help an individual to combat their stress and move forward in their life.

All members who have availed themselves of the telephone helpline have at the end of the call, stated how pleased they were to have found the courage to call and that they appreciated having someone to talk to when feeling at a low ebb.

**HELPLINE FREEPHONE  
0800 783 4778**

they have a confidential advice service they can escape liability

- The employee must show that the harm done has been caused by what the employer has failed to do and will succeed only to the extent they can show the employer has contributed to their condition and this will require an assessment of vulnerability.

In each of the Court of Appeal cases the employee suffered from a psychiatric illness. But in the case of Penelope Hatton, a comprehensive school teacher suffering from depression and medically retired, she said as a result of stress and overwork, the court did not accept that it was directly attributable to her work

or that the employer was in breach of their duty.

The court said that she had a previously unrelated history of depression. Her pattern of absence was easily attributable to causes other than stress at work; that her work load was not excessive in comparison with others and, crucially, that she did not complain so her employers could not reasonably have foreseen the development of her condition.

There are parts of the decision that do not sit easily with the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 (MHSWR and the HSE's approach to safety management set out in its publications 'Successful health and safety management', HSG 65).

## HEALTH AND SAFETY/ASTHMA

### CLAIMS FOR STRESS

**STRESS** cases are extremely difficult to prove. For a claim to succeed the worker must show:

1. They have a psychiatric illness or injury.
2. The claimant's work posed a real risk of causing psychiatric illness and the employer knew (or ought to have known) that the claimant was exposed to that risk.
3. Given the foreseeable risk, the employer failed to take reasonable practicable or adequate steps to prevent or reduce the risk of psychiatric harm to the claimant.
4. The claimant's psychiatric harm was caused, or materially contributed to, by the work and the employer's breach of duty.

Regulation 3 of the MHSWR requires employers to carry out risk assessments of the hazards in their business and put in place appropriate preventative and protective measures to deal with health and safety risks. Regulation 5 requires employers to have in place arrangements for the "effective planning, organisation, control, monitoring and review of the preventative and protective measures".

Regulation 13 MHSWR states that an employer shall take into account an employee's capabilities with respect to work they are asked to do. Paragraph 80 of the Approved Code of Practice to MHSWR states

"When allocating work to employees, employers should ensure that the demands of the job do not exceed the employees' ability to carry out the work without risk to themselves or other .....

Employers should review their employees' capabilities to carry out their work, as necessary".

Paragraph 55 of Tackling Work-related Stress by the HSE (2001) states in relation to paragraph 80 of the ACOP:

"This included making sure that employees' mental health is not put at risk through the work they are required to do. Providing adequate training for the job is an important ingredient".

There are sweeping generalisations in the Court of Appeal's decision and many stress cases are much more complicated and stronger than those considered.

But the onus is clearly on employees to make their problems known to their employers. Employees should complain and complain early and frequently and seek medical help. Despite the prevalence of stress in the workplace, health and safety guidance and risk assessments, the Court of Appeal's view is that there is no obligation on an employer to do anything unless the problem is thrust in their face.

# Employers are failing to tackle risk of asthma

A REPORT from the TUC, entitled "No substitute for action on asthma" is based on a survey of nearly 1,000 safety representatives, working in environments where asthma-causing substances are regularly used.

The main findings of this survey find that:

- Nearly 4 in 10 safety reps had found that workers had developed occupational asthma in the last year.
- 10% of safety reps reported that legal claims for work-related asthma had been settled in the last year.
- Only 8% of employers were substituting safer alternatives to asthma causing substances, even though this is a requirement under the COSHH hazardous substances regulations.

Instead of using safer substitutions, 27% of employers resorted to using respiratory protective equipment.

The survey found that the most common asthma-causing substances that workers were exposed to include glues and resins; wood dust; and latex. Workers are also exposed to isocyanates, (used as a bonding agent), solder/colophony; flour and grain; glutaraldehyde (a disinfectant) and laboratory animals.

49% of safety reps reported that it was more likely for employers to deal with work-related asthma risks under a general risk assessment than under a COSHH risk.

Safety reps also reported that only 28% of employers were actually monitoring the health of workers, and even less, just 23%, were providing proper training for their workforce.

Inspections by the safety reps was the usual way to deal with asthma in the workplace, with 44% having carried out inspections, and 30% providing the workforce they represent with information about asthma. 27% of safety reps had actually raised this issue at their safety committee.

The TUC survey highlighted a distinct lack of training for safety reps in this particular matter, with only 3% having attending a course specifically dealing with asthma. This compares with 25% who attending a course of COSHH and 79% taking a general safety rep training course.

The TUC has launched a new course on asthma for safety reps, which is based on the forthcoming approved Code of Practice.

## HEALTH AND SAFETY

### Compliance with Provisions and Use of Work Equipment Regulations – Mobile Work Equipment

MOBILE work equipment includes items such as dumpers, tractors and lift trucks. All mobile work equipment provided for use before 5 December 1998 must comply with Part III of the Provisions and Use of Work Equipment Regulations 1998 (PUWER) by 5 December 2002. The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) has contacted employers, to remind them that all mobile work equipment must comply with this part of the Regulations.

Part III of PUWER requires those in control of work equipment to consider the risks to mobile work equipment users, such as:

- Drivers' visibility being restricted
- Equipment overturning
- Being struck by another vehicle
- Being struck by falling objects
- Inadequate braking and stopping devices
- Unauthorised starting of the vehicle

It is then the duty of the employers to ensure that the above risks have been addressed by:

- Fitting driver aids, such as mirrors
- Fitting seat restraints, such as seat belts
- Fitting falling-object protection structures (FOPS)
- Fitting roll-over protection structures (ROPS)

### SERVICES FOR MEMBERS SUSTAINING INJURIES

The most recent survey of Union legal services from the TUC for the year 2000 gives information from Unions that represent over 90% of trade union members – this being more than 6 million individual workers.

The main findings are detailed as follows :

- With reference to stress cases, the number of new cases has increased considerably from 516 to 6428.
- There is a substantial increase in workers who have died as a result of asbestos related disease.
- There is an increase in members who have reported that they have been a victim of crime during the course of their work, and there were 1479 claims, with £3 million claimed in compensation.
- The number of new personal injury claims taken up by Unions totalled 51,204, which is a similar figure to the previous year.
- Unions won a total of £321,241,265.00 for their members.

# Criteria for safety investigations

A NEW Enforcement Policy statement has been published by the Health & Safety Commission (HSC), which for the first time sets out the specific criteria to ascertain whether to investigate and prosecute breaches of health and safety law.

This policy applies to all of Britain's enforcing authorities, including the Health & Safety Executive (HSE) and all local authorities in England, Scotland and Wales.

It will be made clear to employers, employees, the public and inspectors, what standards they should be expecting when it comes to enforcing health and safety in the workplace.

The Enforcement Policy states that prosecution should take place in a number of circumstances, including the following:

- When there is a workplace death because of a breach of the law.
- When there has been a disregard of health and safety requirement
- If the offender's standard of health and safety management falls below what is required.
- Where there is a failure to comply with an Improvement Notice or Prohibition Notice.
- When there has been a repetition of a breach that was the subject of a formal caution.

Whether to investigate a workplace accident/incident must take account of certain factors, including:

- The severity and scale of actual harm or the potential for actual harm.
- The gravity of any potential breach of the law.
- The previous health and safety record of the offender.
- The practicality of achieving results.

The Enforcement Policy also requires that all enforcing authorities and their inspectors should:

- Take enforcement action against the management chain, including individual directors and managers, if evidence shows that is justified.
- Immediately notify the director/manager of an offending organisation each and every time an Improvement Notice or Prohibition Notice is issued, or a prosecution takes place.

## CONFERENCE 2002



Delegates vote to back the Executive's pay report

## PAY DEBATE

# Fair pay means 30k!

"IF YOU are not prepared to pay us, get your Green Goddesses ready because you are going to need them!"

This was the blunt message to the Government and employers from South Yorkshire delegate **Paul Matthewman**. The sentiments summed up the mood of the union facing the possibility of national strike action for the second time in its history.

As delegates voted unanimously to campaign for a salary of £30,000 for emergency fire control staff and firefighters, with pay parity for firefighters working the Retained Duty System, Paul spoke of the universal disgust of current pay levels which force staff to claim Working Family Tax Credit: "It is intolerable that our members work day and day out and then have to go home and scrounge off the state," he said.

During a two-hour debate delegates from every region condemned poor pay and working conditions and gave General Secretary **Andy Gilchrist** a two-minute standing ovation following a fighting speech outlining the case for a professional salary settlement.

They are arguments endorsed by an FBU report



**Paul Matthewman:** Blunt message

commissioned from the Labour Research Department which looked at the Fire Service National Pay Formula.

The Formula was drawn up following the 1977 strike, but is now out of date in terms of wages and jobs which have become more complex and skilled.

Andy Gilchrist said: "We have the evidence to support the claim of £30,000. To begin the slogans: 'Fair Pay Means 30K!'"

A fully qualified firefighter is paid around £100 a week less than average male earnings, pay reaches £21,000 only after five years training and £24,000 for a leading firefighter following 15 years service.

Comparing Downing Street's red carpet treatment of company directors and financiers with public service trade unions, the General Secretary asked: "Why are those who serve, yes, that's what we do, serve our communities, slapped down publicly for wanting to provide a decent standard of living for their families?"

It's a pay claim demanding fair, not special treatment, he said,



**Andy Gilchrist:** Evidence to support claim

## CONFERENCE 2002



**Matt Lee:** We are worth it and the public knows it



**Sandy McNiven:** Don't praise us, pay us



**Danny Whitelock:** Maybe we should donate £100,000



**Delegates** applaud the vote for a campaign

to reflect the commitment of workers who have "kept the UK Fire Service up to scratch during 20 years of under funding."

During a period when calls had increased dramatically by 80 per cent, and a 100 per cent rise in call outs to RTAs, rail accidents and flooding. "Years in which your training was restricted because of lack of funds. Years in which the Health and Safety Executive said, in relation to the tragic death of firefighters, that more training was needed in some Brigades in order to meet basic safety standards.

"Despite these obstacles, another Government body, the Audit Commission, praised the Fire Service as one of the 'best performing public services'."

The General Secretary went on: "They seem to know more about us than career crazed Chief Fire Officers or the employers with whom we have to deal with, who seem to come and go every year."

He slammed politicians for basking in the reflected glory of firefighting staff: "If you had a fiver for every time we have heard politicians thanking firefighters for their bravery and professionalism you could all retire tomorrow. "We'd have a lot more than £30,000, we'd be millionaires!"

But unsolicited testimonials at the scene of major disasters and life threatening incidents do not pay the mortgage. "They don't buy the new school clothes for the kids or pay for one decent holiday a year."

He explained "a trial commissioned by the appropriate Government department indicated a need for a 100 per cent increase in personnel." This confirmed that successive Govern-

**Retained firefighters – for whom the claim is a £7,500 retainer and £13.74 an hour worked – have been particularly neglected**

### There is no such thing as a wholetime fire or a retained fire

ments have been getting "a first class service for third class wages with half the necessary personnel."

Turning to retained firefighters, where the claim is for a £7500 retainer and £13.74 per hour worked, he said they had been particularly neglected: "They are firefighters like their Wholetime Sisters and Brothers. But their training, their kit, their equipment, their money, is sub-standard."

Arguing that negotiation was the preferred route, the General Secretary also warned: "We know only too well the consequences of industrial action in the emergency services. "But if we are forced, I tell you this, there will be a recall conference and this Executive will recommend strike action."

Derbyshire delegate **Matt Lee** also received a standing ovation when he said: "It's a scandal that we have members throughout the UK who are able to claim tax credits." Calling for equal pay throughout the service, he said: "We know we are worth it and the public know we are worth it."

**Sandy McNiven** from Strathclyde told the politicians: "Don't praise us, pay us!" He told Conference "there is no such thing as a Wholetime fire or a Retained fire" (please box quote) and added: "Andy, your Tartan Army is assembled and waiting to march!"

**Danny Whitelock**, Buckinghamshire, was scathing, and referring to the donation to New Labour from Express Newspapers and soft porn publisher Richard Desmond, said: "The Government say they can't influence employers, maybe we should bung them £100,000 and then they will listen."

Summing up, the General Secretary pledged that negotiations will not be along the lines of an "open ended, month on month, traditional pay dispute." The union is looking for a settlement by November, "the timetable is not negotiable and the figure is not negotiable," he promised.

## AFFILIATION

# 'Backdoor' Labour Party disaffiliation is rejected

MOVES to end the union's political funding of the Labour Party were overwhelmingly defeated by delegates. But the continued support was qualified with constant criticism of Labour Government policies and General Secretary **Andy Gilchrist** compared the relationship to "putting a strain on a rocky marriage."

Opponents had called for the political fund to be used to support candidates and organisations campaigning for FBU policies and principles, including those standing against New Labour.

However the General Secretary argued that while the union did not always agree with the Party, or the TUC, he maintained it was better to put the arguments from within the movement. He also stated that dissenters were being "disingenuous" and claimed their real aim was to end the union's 70 year affiliation to Labour.

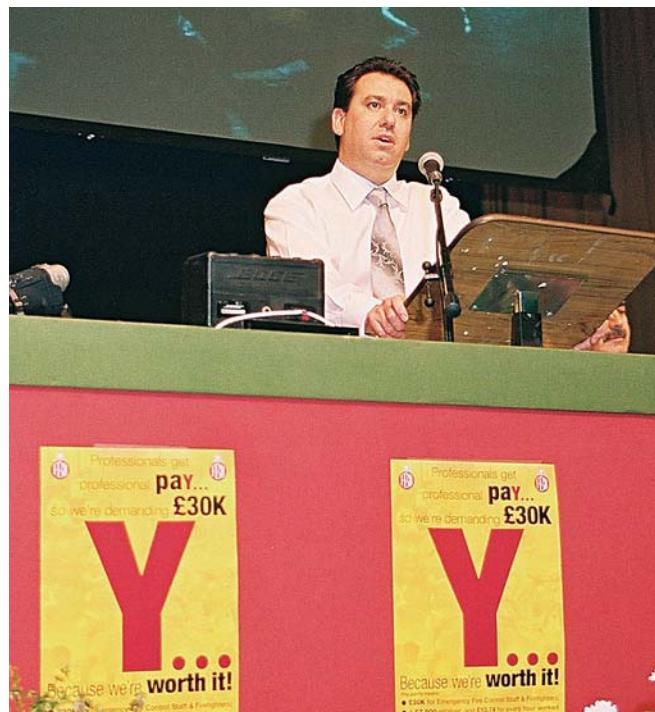
He told delegates: "What we do is to keep arguing the case for socialism and keep campaigning until we build up that majority for change and are no longer in the minority." He conceded that while investment had taken place in public services, it was not enough: "Yes we have been disturbed, deeply disturbed, about the Government's direction and attempts to rectify things through the private sector."

"He spoke of the "horror and disappointment" of the election of the three BNP councillors in Burnley, but pointed that they received 12 per cent of the votes, against the 0.9 per cent of the Socialist Alliance.

Declaring that the debate was about disaffiliating from the Labour Party, the General Secretary said: "At present we can and do use political funds to campaign for a better fire service and for



*The debate must continue*



**Andy Gilchrist: Better for trade union movement to get its act together**

better public services. "For this reason this union does not shovel bucketloads of money into the Labour Party." However supporting independent or other candidates would mean: "We will be flung out of mainstream politics and into the political wilderness."

The debate must continue with other trade unions, within party constituencies, and in the Parliamentary Labour Party. This would be more beneficial than "behaving almost in a maverick fashion."

The General Secretary challenged those behind the amendments to take the honest position of proposing disaffiliation, and said: "We cannot and are not going to make changes by such backdoor moves as this motion proposes." There is an element of opportunism about all the amendments and this union is too important for gesture politics."

It was better for the trade union movement to "get its act together" and work collectively than criticise a Labour Govern-

## CONFERENCE 2002



**Kenny Ross:** *We can't debate if we're not involved*



**Paul Woolstenholmes:** *Issue is democracy*



**Steve Richings:** *No to splendid isolation*

ment for making no difference to peoples' lives, he said. The trade union link has been important for revitalising the Labour Party: "We have a voice constitutionally by right in the Labour Party, which is not the case in other left wing parties." The General Secretary concluded: "As socialists we believe that change is possible, but we also have to be able to be hard headed and disciplined to win."

**Kenny Ross**, Strathclyde, supporting the status quo, said that the Labour Government's stance on many issues had been "enormously frustrating for all of us."

The union campaigns for index-linked pensions, against racist treatment of asylum seekers, and jumping on American President George Bush's war bandwagon.

Bro. Ross said: "But what chance do we have of changing that debate if we are not involved?" The Scottish Region has stopped donating money to Labour because members were disillusioned

said Bro. Ross. But he called on members to be "pragmatic" and added: "We have to go for change from within."

**Paul Woolstenholmes**, Suffolk, said that the Executive had shifted the argument to affiliation: "It doesn't accurately reflect the instruction we gave the Executive Council last year." He highlighted the irony that the union may be taking strike action against a Labour Government and Labour Council employers, and argued that the issue was about "democratising the political fund."

**Derek Osborne**, Bedfordshire, agreed: "We should have the right to support people and parties who support the rights of members of the union, but that is not always the Labour Party candidate."

However **Steve Richings**, West Yorkshire, said to the dissenters: "We can still do more because we are part of the Labour Party." And he appealed to conference: "Don't take us into splendid isolation."

### EMERGENCY COVER

## Union will lead on emergency cover

ANY attempts to alter policy which puts at risk public safety and the lives of firefighters will be defended by strike action, pledged General Secretary **Andy Gilchrist**.

Speaking on an emergency resolution covering Fire Service Emergency Cover, Andy Gilchrist said: "The vast majority of our disputes or industrial action have been taken by members to defend the services we provide, and to ensure that our member's lives and members of the public are not the cost of political ideology or by Labour maintaining the current spending policies of the Tories in the first two years."

He told conference that the resolution was designed to set out a framework for the future, and for the first time in 23 years the union intends not only to protect what is in place, but lead improvements. "Our agenda for safer communities and safer fire-

fighters must not be compromised, and any attacks on us will be met by strong action," he promised.

Although the CFBAC Task Group on the Fire Cover Review has not been published, Andy Gilchrist called for an endorsement of the union "taking ownership of the risk basis emergency cover. "A strategy we will defend, if necessary, through the strength of our membership."

He went on: "Others have over the years attempted to hijack the concept of risk. Our members are unique within that environment, because we run into that environment when everyone else is running away." A risk-based system is simply a matter of assessing risk and then making a response, to allow that risk to be identified and dealt with effectively and safely.

The General Secretary called for a shift in emphasis from fire

prevention to fire safety.

He went on: "I don't believe we should try and defend the status quo, I don't believe we can defend the status quo." The results of Pathfinder Trials indicate that Brigades have to be increased in size by 100 per cent, and the cost of providing the service would increase from £1.6 billion to £3.76 billion.

"If that's what is required to protect our communities, then so be it," the General Secretary said. "There are problems of under-staffing and crewing shortages, and gaps in training. The Prime Minister and Chancellor have begun at long last to address the funding of public services, but I sometimes wonder if they know we are even there."

"It's not just the nurses and police who need staff and extra funding, its firefighters and emergency fire control staff."

Safety, conditions of service and jobs will not be compromised, he added, "we will defend these at all costs, and if

necessary by strike action."

**Sean Cahill**, West Yorkshire, supporting the resolution, told conference: "We can't let the Government off the hook on this one, if they want a fire service fit for the future they have to invest.

"We can't let KPMG or any other organisation penny pinch. The ball is firmly in the politicians' court. How many deaths must the service and community suffer? Cuts cost lives."



**Sean Cahill: Ball in politicians' court**

## REPRESENTATION

# Bid to change policy defeated

AN ATTEMPT to change the representation policy was defeated.

Essex moved that "ALL union members should be represented and supported by the union, whenever they are subjected to the discipline regulations until those procedures are exhausted."

However National Officer **Geoff Ellis** asked: "Representation for all? For bullies, sexist, racists, for nazis? I think not."

He said that the policy is there "to give protection to our most vulnerable members" and the proposed change would "send out the wrong message to those who are being harassed."

**Samantha Gordon**, West Midlands, seconding the "Fairness at Work" document, argued that the resolution would "only undermine and dilute the policy."

However **Katie Lane**, London, argued that bullies who are not represented may be seen as "martyrs".

**Graeme Noakes**, Essex, said that members have a right to representation when facing discipline by the Fire Service. Linda Shanahan, Fife, said: "Representing harassers who don't have an arguable defence is indefensible."

And **Matt Brady**, National Gay and Lesbian Committee, said: "Our subs don't entitle us to a get out of jail free card. Subs do not give us the right to behave in any way we want."

**Danny Whitelock**, Buckinghamshire, added: "Members should treat everyone with respect, and if they don't, we don't want them."



**Geoff Ellis: protection for most vulnerable members**



**Samantha Gordon: don't undermine Fairness at Work**



**Graeme Noakes: Members have right to representation**



**Katie Lane: danger of bullies becoming martyrs**

## CONFERENCE 2002



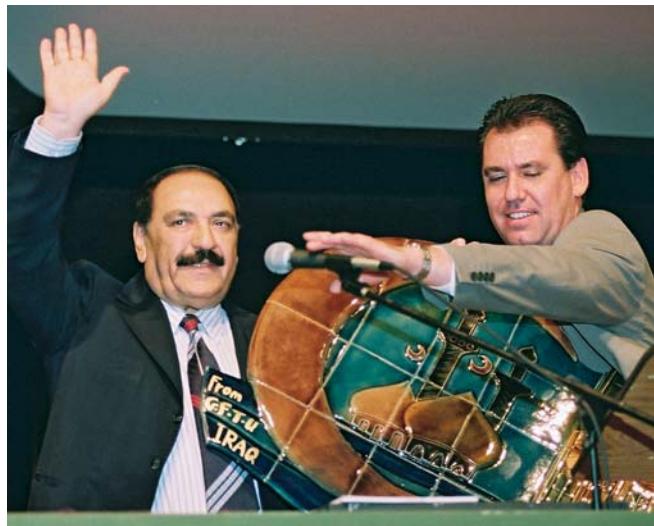
### INTERNATIONAL GUESTS



Cuban fraternal delegate  
Ramon Delgado Rubayna



Luis Fernandez from the  
Colombian trade union  
SINTRA



Iraqi fraternal delegate Ahmed Al-Jibour makes a presentation  
to General Secretary Andy Gilchrist



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## ILL HEALTH RETIREMENT

# A Merseyside tale – or 'un-care in the community'

## (PUBLISHED WITHOUT COMMENT)

OUR member had been appointed as a junior firefighter in 1971 and confirmed as a qualified firefighter in 1973. Since then he'd served as a regular firefighter on operational duties until May 1992 when he was posted to duties in fire safety.

These duties were non-operational but he remained a regular firefighter who was available both contractually and in practice to engage in firefighting as and when required.

He was promoted to the rank of Sub Officer in 1996, his duties remaining non-operational but on the same basis as before.

In 1997, his health deteriorated with the onset of stiffness and pain in his joints. The BMA advised the Chief Fire Officer that he was permanently disabled from operational duties.

On the 8th February 1998, in light of that advice, Chief Fire Officer Best wrote to our member confirming that he would continue on permanent non-operational duties with immediate effect. Since that date our member performed his non-operational duties as before but was not available, contractually or in practice, to engage in firefighting as and when required. Accordingly he was not, from then on, a regular firefighter.

Our member's health further deteriorated and the BMA advised the Fire Authority in March 2001 that our member was not fit for any duties. He was off sick from then onwards.

In March 2001 our member wrote to Chief Fire Officer Saunders, (who had succeeded Best), claiming to be entitled to an ill health pension under Rule 3 of the Fireman's Pension Scheme.

By reply dated April 2001, Chief Fire Officer Saunders refused medical retirement, asserting both that the contract of employment had been varied from February 1998 and that our member was still a regular Firefighter who might still be required to respond to emergency incidents and carry out duties excluding:

- Lifting weights in excess of 5 Kilograms;
- Any work which required a normal strength of either hand
- Repetitive manual handling.

Chief Fire Officer Saunders, unhelpfully, did not explain how our member would be able to respond to emergency incidents whilst restricted from performing the above activities.

We instructed Thompsons Solicitors afterwards, and they obtained the necessary documentation and instructed counsel.

Our solicitors then wrote to Chief Fire Officer Saunders formally requesting a reconsideration of his decision.

The matter was dealt with by Assistant Chief Fire Officer Burns. He stated that our member had voluntarily agreed to a variation of his duties. He said he was prepared to reconsider our member's case but only as and when further medical information became available.

Mr. Burns subsequently wrote to say he had been informed that our member's condition was such that he was capable of performing the duties required in his contract of employment.

On receipt of the papers from Counsel, Notice of Appeal under H323 of the Fireman's Pension Scheme was lodged with the court on 25th September 2001.

The court gave directions on 26th October 2001. These required the Fire Authority to:

- serve details of pension entitlement and an answer to the appeal;
- for the service of schedule and counter schedules of loss;
- for the exchange of witness statements and skeleton arguments; and
- for the matter to be listed before the court with an estimated length of hearing of one day.

It then appears that the Fire Authority hurriedly agreed to reconsider our member's request. Negotiations ensued and it was agreed that our member's contract with the Authority should be terminated on the grounds of ill health with the effective date of termination being 23 December 2001. Payment of salary was made up to that date.

Our member was deemed to have been retired under the Fireman's Pension Scheme from 18th February 1998. He received a lump sum of £48,139.80 and a pension of £9,627.99. Arrears of that pension between 18 February 1998 and 23 December 2001 were paid together with refund of pension contributions.

Our member was happy for the matter to be concluded in this way.

The Authority agreed to pay our costs, which our Solicitors are in the process of negotiating.

This is yet another case in which Chief Fire Officer Saunders and Assistant Chief Fire Officer Burns failed to deal properly with a legitimate request for ill health retirement at a substantial cost to Merseyside Fire and Civil Defence Authority.

Many thanks to Matthew Tollitt of Thompsons for his help in this matter.

# Retirement granted after Crown Court proceedings are instigated

**OUR member was involved in a road traffic accident during the course of his work in February 2000. He was the driver of a fire appliance which was involved in a head on collision.**

**He was certified as unfit for duty and remained off work. As of August 2001 he had undertaken a course of pain management but continued to complain of upper spinal pain and discomfort in the left knee. In his report to Assistant Chief Fire Officer Burns of Merseyside Fire Service, dated August 2001, the BMA expressed the view that he did not believe our member would in future reach the levels of fitness required for an operational Firefighter.**

**In spite of this clear cut opinion, ACFO Burns refused to consider the request to be retired. This was on the somewhat spurious grounds that the results of a further MRI scan needed to be known. There was never any indication that this would affect the opinion of the BMA as to the question of permanent incapacity.**

**Our solicitors, Thompsons, wrote to ACFO Burns stating our member's case and requested copies of the relevant medical evidence.**

**The medical reports disclosed confirmed our solicitor's understanding of the position and they wrote to ACFO Burns in December 2001 stating that instructions to proceed to the Crown Court had been received.**

**On the 9th January 2002, our member received notification that he was to be compulsorily retired from his employment with the Authority on the grounds of ill health and that his employment would terminate at midnight on 6th December 2001.**

**Our member will receive his ill health pension but an injury award has been refused. Our member has submitted an appeal which is being dealt with by his Regional Officials.**

**Once again, our thanks to Matthew Tollitt of Thompsons, for his valued help in this matter.**

# £250,000 settlement for post traumatic stress disorder

**IN JULY 1995 our member turned out to a chemical incident.**

**The appliance was involved in a severe collision while travelling around 45-50 mph and collided with an articulated lorry, then wiped out a set of traffic lights and partially demolished a wall. The driver was trapped inside the vehicle as a result.**

**Whilst our member suffered only relatively minor physical injury he also reported to his GP feeling depressed and attended for counselling with the Brigade.**

**He eventually reported back for work some three months later, but found this difficult, taking maximum holidays, and the maximum number of courses in order to minimise his time at the workplace.**

**He would vomit frequently especially if anything triggered a recollection of the accident. His condition gradually worsened until in March 1999 he was medically retired. His condition was severe and disabling requiring intensive therapy which is ongoing.**

**We brought proceedings on behalf of our member against the Fire Service, not only for his physical injury, but also for Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) caused by the accident. The Fire Service admitted their liability for the incident but stated that it had not caused the members injury of PTSD.**

**The case was fought and proceeded to a contested trial.**

**Psychiatrists appeared for both our member and the Defendants. It was disputed that our member had PTSD at all by the Defendants who said that the symptoms were not truly characteristic of the condition as the Claimant had gone back to work and was showing no signs of 'avoidance' of the job of Firefighting.**

**The Defendants expert even went so far at trial as to arrange for delivery of documents to the Judge to influence his point of view after the evidence had been heard!**

**However the Judge agreed with our member's psychiatrist and found that the member was suffering from PTSD as a result of the incident.**

**Our member was awarded the sum of £40,000 for his pain and suffering and a further £239,611.18 for his past and future financial losses.**

**Our member sends his thanks for the support and efforts made by his Union on his behalf, and in turn, we thank Marcus Weatherby of Thompsons for his assistance with this matter.**

## SEPTEMBER 11



A New York firefighter walks through the debris at Ground Zero where the twin towers used to stand

# What price a hero?

**The following article appeared in The Metro Section of the New York Times newspaper, dated 13 April 2002**

THE Bloomberg (Mayor of New York) administration has prepared a list of potential emergency cuts to city agencies beyond those to be outlined next week in the mayor's executive budget, including one proposal to close nearly ten fire companies, city officials say.

The emergency cuts would be carried out only if the city fails to get the state and federal help it had been counting on and the concessions it anticipates from unions. In addition to the firehouse cuts, the list of potential reductions includes the further consolidation of recreational sites for the elderly and reductions in the number of times that homeless shelters are cleaned. That the Bloomberg administration would even consider cutting parts of the budget considered sacrosanct under Mayor Rudolph W Giuliani, like fire companies, particularly after September 11th underscores the seriousness of New York's fiscal problems.

Fire officials said that in meetings, city budget officials got testy with department officials for not preparing what they considered adequate cuts. The Fire Department will probably be forced to close as many as ten fire companies in its contingency plans, a city official said.

Some firehouses in the city are "double company" firehouses, containing both ladder and engine companies. It is possible that

the engine portion would close in a low-volume firehouse and the ladder truck remain, officials said. Engine companies are normally the first to respond to calls and put water on the fire; ladder companies ventilate buildings and look for occupants.

"That contingency plan only takes effect if we don't get the aid we are requesting from the state and federal government and labor unions," said William T. Cunningham, the mayor's communications director.

"If we can't close the budget gap, we have asked the agencies for additional items that would be part of that plan. These may be distasteful items, but that is what happens if we don't have a budget".

Union officials expressed dismay yesterday at the contingency plans. Matty James, the Brooklyn trustee for the Uniformed Firefighters Association, said the closing of any firehouse or company would be completely unacceptable to the Union,

"We will go to the streets on this matter, we will go to the public, we will go to every council member in this city," he said. "If they do this to us, we will not forget every politician involved with this, and I will haunt them until the day I die".

Francis X. Gribbon, a Fire Department spokesman, said last night that he had no idea if the cuts were coming. I have heard the same rumours that you are hearing," Mr Gribbon said. "But I don't know that it is true. Every agency was told to give contingency programs and there have been back and forths. But whether closing firehouses is a definite proposal, I can't say."

Any support that our Comrades in New York require will of course be given.

# Firefighter's account of World Trade Centre attacks

WHEN disaster struck in downtown Manhattan on 11th September, veteran New York Firefighter Dennis Smith was among the first to arrive at the scene.

Despite being 61 years old and retired, he was an active participant in the doomed rescue attempts at Ground Zero for several weeks. Report from Ground Zero is his insiders account of the heroic efforts of the firefighters, police and emergency medical workers who rushed to downtown New York to face the biggest challenge of their lives.

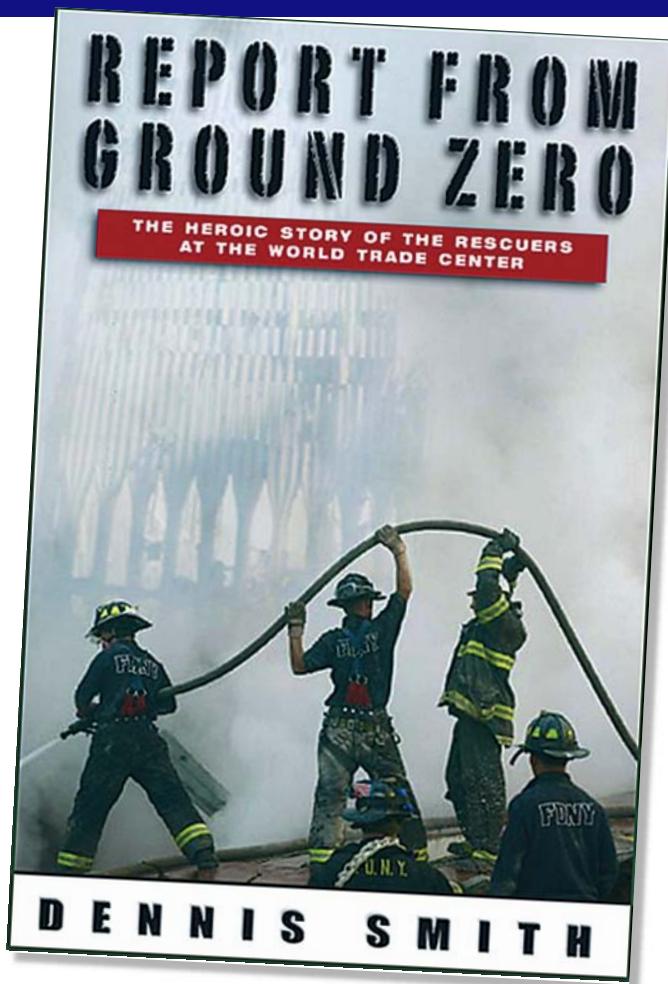
In all, 343 firefighters were reported missing or were identified among the dead. Entire companies were lost. Among the dead were a father and son; the department's chaplain; commanders and rookies. Smith tells their stories and those of their families, he tells of the intense camaraderie in their companies and of the massive recovery efforts that were undertaken in the days following the catastrophe.

As the world tries to come to terms with the horror of what happened in New York, the courage and fortitude in the face of enormous personal danger and bereavement of the firefighters and other rescue workers offers a beacon of hope, a promise of redemption. Report from Ground Zero is a deeply moving tribute to these heroes for our troubled times.

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Irish-American Dennis Smith was a New York City firefighter for 18 years and served in some of the most active and dangerous districts before he retired in 1980. Hailed as 'the Poet Laureate of Firefighters' by the New York Post, he is the author of three best-selling books on firefighting, including *Report from Engine Co. 82* (1972), which he wrote whilst stationed at the South Bronx firehouse that was the world's busiest at the time. Widely acclaimed, it has sold over 2 million copies and has been translated into 13 languages.

Dennis Smith's service to firefighters and his leadership in their causes has been recognised in numerous significant awards, most recently by the Congressional Fire Services Institute, the



National Fire Academy, and the International Association of Fire Chiefs.

In 1991 he created the Foundation for American Firefighters with the royalties from one of his books. The foundation supports health and safety efforts through grants to respected organisations in the fire service and burns care facilities. He is a trustee of the New York Fire Foundation and serves on the board of the Congressional Fire Services Institute.

Dennis Smith is also the founding editor of *Firehouse Magazine*.

Royalties from this book are being donated to a number of the rescue charities, including The New York Police and Fire Widows and Children Fund and Transworld Publishers' parent company has donated \$2 million to the fund to aid the families of firefighters and other rescue workers.

## REPORT FROM GROUND ZERO

**The heroic story of the rescuers at the World Trade Center**

**Dennis Smith**

**Published 18 March 2002**

**Doubleday trade paperback, £10.99**

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# Globalisation: the new imperialism

**Paul Embrey**  
**Branch Secretary, Islington FBU, Region 11**

A CHARGE often levelled at the anti-globalisation movement is one of inconsistency. "You claim to be internationalists," argue the critics, "yet you want to restrict nation states forging closer ties with others."

In his thought-provoking article in Volume 30 No. 1 issue of Firefighter, Professor Phil Cerny came close to making the above accusation by suggesting that, 'Globalisation is neither good nor bad in and of itself', and that the Left should not, therefore, retreat into a "closed anti-globalisation stance." The real task, contends Professor Cerny, is to examine new methods of organisation which go beyond the current confines of the nation state.

No serious progressive could argue with the final part of this analysis: the need for workers to acknowledge that their common interest is best served by pursuing solidarity beyond national boundaries.

The assertion, however, that globalisation is, in itself, no bad thing, and that to demonstrate against it is to effectively march up a political cul-de-sac, requires some attention.

## INTERNATIONALISM NOT GLOBAL CAPITALISM

Firstly, it is important to make the distinction here between globalisation and internationalism, because they are very surely two separate entities. Internationalism – a kind of social globalisation – is about the bringing together of different peoples and cultures, and, from the labour movement's point of view, should be welcomed. Globalisation – that is to say economic integration, the more accepted interpretation of the term – is about the dominance of the world by capital.

Globalisation is underpinned by a philosophy rooted in the theories of free market economics. That is, the unfettered rule of market forces over everything. Previously, capitalist organisation had largely, though not absolutely, been confined to functioning within individual nation states. However, advances in communications and technology, combined with the ending of the Cold War, have significantly eroded these boundaries. Hence, it is now commonplace for billions of dollars to be shifted across entire continents at the press of a button, in the search for greater profits.

The international bodies that are the driving forces behind the deepening penetration of globalisation into all our lives are the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank, and the World Trade Organisation. These institutions, wholly undemocratic and dominated by the G7, are themselves driven by the desire to promote the free market, ostensibly in the interests of everyone, but, in reality, in the interests of the world's richest countries.

The strain of capitalist economics upon which their policies are based is "neoliberalism". The guiding principle of neo-liberal economics is that the state should withdraw from intervening in economic affairs. It is an extension of what was known as "monetarism", the belief that nothing has a right to exist unless it makes money, and an economic doctrine adhered to by the Thatcher and Reagan governments in the eighties and pursued with equal vigour by new Labour.

The belief in minimum state intervention impels the new-liberals to argue for such action as the privatisation of nationalised industries, low taxation, and an end to state subsidies for food, housing and fuel. "Developing" countries are urged to drop controls on imports from rich countries, and multinationals encouraged to take over the provision of health, education and water services.

Any impoverished country wishing to obtain a loan from the IMF/World Bank, for example, must agree to a "Structural Adjustment Programme" (SAP). These programmes compel the country in question to implement such policies as those above, plus the slashing of workers' wages, conditions and rights, and reductions in vital public expenditure. A failure to implement these policies would result in the loan being cancelled.

The benefit for the weak countries, declare the neo-liberals, is that through the opening-up of new export markets, they will be able to attract increased foreign investment. This in turn will stimulate employment and economic growth, which will lead to wealth – wait for it – "trickling down" to the poor.

So there we have it. The famous old "trickle down" theory. A theory that is the cornerstone of the philosophy of the agents of globalisation. A theory championed in the past by Thatcher and Reagan, and now by George Bush and Tony Blair. A theory that failed in America, failed in Britain, and is failing, with horrific consequences, in the Third World.



**Life in the Third World – on the rubbish dump in Managua, Nicaragua**

Because the truth is that wealth does not trickle down. On the contrary, the gap between rich and poor, internationally and in Britain, is growing ever wider. And instead of wealth cascading down to the poor, we see it being increasingly shovelled in completely the opposite direction.

A survey carried out by the economist Rehman Sobhan found that of seventy six countries implementing SAPs, only four had consistently improved their economic performance. And far from stimulating economic growth, the majority of IMF loans merely service interest on past loans and ensure that the borrowing nation is more indebted than it was at the beginning.

### **NEO-LIBERALISM'S ROTTEN RECORD**

Neo-liberal policies have resulted in devastation and ruin. SAPs contribute to the death each day in the Third World of 19,000 children, as money that ought to be spent on healthcare goes instead towards debt repayments. Basic healthcare in the Third World has indeed been decimated.

There has been a rise in infant mortality rates, and public hospitals and clinics in parts of sub-Saharan Africa, Latin America and Asia have become breeding grounds for disease. SAPs have

also led to mass unemployment, the destruction of local industry, the introduction of massive fees for health and education, and environmental havoc.

For its part the WTO, the body which enforces free market trade rules across the globe, has also contributed to this deplorable state of affairs. Its imposition of contrived copyright rules prevents poor countries from making their own medical drugs and selling them cheaply to its people. Instead, they are obliged to obtain licences from Western multinationals, and sell the drugs at a rate that few can afford. Consequently, millions of people across the Third World are dying from perfectly curable diseases such as malaria, cholera and TB – all sacrificed for the sake of a fast buck.

The whole phenomenon of globalisation amounts to a new form of imperialism. This time, however, the imperialists are companies as well as countries. So whereas traditional imperialism was based on military invasion and the expropriation of raw materials, this latest imperialism exists through the dismantling of economic barriers, and the precious commodity for the new imperialists – the multinationals – is cheap labour. As a result, the wealth of many companies has now outgrown that of some nation

# GLOBALISATION

states. The Ford motor company, for instance, is richer than the whole of South Africa; Toyota is wealthier than Norway, and so on.

## RIGHTS OF MOVEMENT EXPLOITER AND EXPLOITED

The contradiction that lies at the core of the globalisers' argument, however, is this: they believe in the free movement of capital, yet they oppose the free movement of labour. So while the masters of capital exercise their right to circumnavigate the globe in an attempt to increase their profits, the servants of capital, ordinary working people, are denied the right to migrate in order to increase their wage.

The recent reprehensible behaviour of the vacuum cleaner firm, Dyson, is a case in point. Despite the fact that the 800 employees at the Dyson factory in Wiltshire have spent the best part of the last decade building up that company, establishing it as a world name, and making their employer enormous profits into the bargain, the owner of Dyson has seen fit to now close the factory, throw his hard-working and dedicated employees onto the dole, and transfer the whole concern to Malaysia. And he has done this for no other reason than that the labour costs in Malaysia are 75 per cent cheaper than in Britain, and, by moving to the Far East, he will increase his already colossal wealth still further. By the logic of the neo-liberals, this makes good business sense. But if a Malaysian worker employed on sweatshop wages decided to move to Britain in order to increase his or her "wealth", they would be thwarted by border controls.

And this is the injustice that pervades global capitalism. For the exploiters of labour, free global movement remains an acceptable pursuit; for those who provide that labour, however, such free movement is forbidden. This dovetails with the current hysteria surrounding asylum seekers in Britain, in that the victims of global capitalism have become the scapegoats for the system, while its perpetrators, the true "economic migrants" – Gates, Murdoch, Branson et al. – get away scot-free.

## DEMOCRACY DENIED

In addition to the pernicious social and economic effects of globalisation, there are deeply disturbing ramifications for democracy too. The ability of the multinationals to wreck national economies by moving enormous amounts of wealth in and out of nations on a whim has seen their influence increase by such proportions that elected national leaders are often regarded as no more important than parish councillors.

And the insistence of many leaders that there is no alternative to global capitalism, and that, by extension, the success of national economies depends largely on outside forces, leaves people wondering what, therefore, is the point of voting? And this unhealthy but entirely understandable sentiment manifests itself, as we have witnessed, in derisory turnouts at General Elections.

Because, in the final analysis, the ballot box is the mechanism by which the governors are forced to listen to the governed. And it is when this umbilical cord becomes severed that voter

cynicism sets in. This cynicism leads to apathy, and apathy has often, as in Germany in the thirties, the potential to lead to fascism, where a right-wing demagogue comes along promising to take the people out of their despair, blames the problems on Jews or blacks or asylum-seekers, and declares that by eradicating these most vulnerable sections of society, the country can achieve full employment, economic prosperity, and so on.

The European single currency is a further example of globalisation's undemocratic nature. Again, support for the Euro stems from the belief that there is no alternative to the free market, and involves the transfer of power over the economy to a European Central Bank which has no democratic legitimacy and is accountable to nobody but itself.

Those who possess the kind of power that has the potential to affect the lives of other people ought surely to be accountable to and, if necessary, removable by those same people. And, regardless of the alleged economic advantages of the Euro, unproven as they are, the day we discover that we cannot remove the people who govern us is the day that democracy dies.

If there is any similarity between Western capitalism and the communism of Joe Stalin, it is that they both loathe democracy. They both reject the idea that the people ought to be able to change not just the managers of the system – but the system itself. And in the same way that the Kremlin apparatchiks were not elected, neither are the bureaucrats that run big business, the ME, WTO and the World and European Central Banks.

## THE CHALLENGE FOR TRADE UNIONS

We must, though, campaign against globalisation in a way that isn't nationalistic. (This is why on the Euro, for example, the Left must run a completely separate campaign from those on the Right, who are against the Euro simply through a jaundiced dislike of foreigners.) The influence of the nation state has diminished, and we must look to broaden our horizons and forge new international alliances. However, the nation state is not yet completely redundant, and we should not be deterred from lending our support to those movements fighting the effects of capitalism at a national level.

Of course it's accurate to say that, particularly with its connotations of xenophobia, jingoism and class division, the nation state is not an end in itself. However, the right to national self-government is infinitely more desirable than the subjugation of a nation's people by means of imperialism.

This is why it has been correct for the FBU and the wider working class movement to have in the past shown our solidarity with genuine national liberation movements fighting the imperialism of a greater military power, and why it is right for us now to be uniting with the anti-globalisation movement in confronting the economic imperialism of the multinationals.

Globalisation is responsible for the suffering of hundreds of millions of citizens, and has seriously undermined the concept of democracy. It must be confronted. Trade unions have a potentially massive and influential role to play in this growing movement. It would be remiss of us not to be at the heart of it.

# Genocide continues against Colombian trade unionists

**Report by Jesus Antonio Gonzalez Luna  
Director, Human Rights Department,  
Colombian Workers Federation (CUT)**

## ASSASSINATIONS

On 7th April 2002, teacher **Fredy Armando Giron Burbano** was assassinated on the Pan American highway running past the town of El Patia, in Cauca Department. He was taken off a public bus at a place known as el Estanquillo, which is five kilometres out of town. Armed men belonging to the paramilitary groups that operate in the region took him down and executed him with

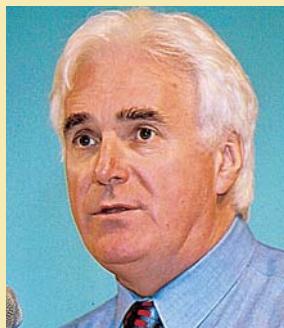
firearms. The comrade was an activist in the Cauca Teachers Association ASOINCA-CUT.

On 16th April 2002, **Tito Libio Hernandez Ordóñez** was assassinated in the city of Pasto, Nariño Department, at his place of work (Narino University). He was tackled by two armed hooded men who shot him several times. He was taken to San Pedro Hospital where he died a few minutes after his arrival.

Comrade Tito was President of the Pasto Branch of University Employees and Workers Union of Colombia SINTRAUNICOL – CUT, and a social leader of the Freedom District in Pasto and a member of the work group for the Social and Political Front. He was

**CONTINUED OVER PAGE**

## GILBERTO TORRES IS FREE!



**Dave Patton**  
**National Officer – Legal  
and Health & Safety**

SOME members may wonder why it is that the FBU involves itself in international affairs.

In a recent edition of *Firefighter*, an article outlined the current position within Colombia; the threat to democracy, and in particular, the very real threat to trade unionists on a daily basis.

It is not only great news to read the following report, but clearly shows that trade unions can mean the difference between life and death for many people the world over.

After six weeks in the hands of the paramilitaries, Gilberto Torres, a regional leader of the Colombian oil workers union USO (Unió Sindical Obrera) was freed on Sunday 7 April 2002.

Gilberto was kidnapped as he left work on the OCENSA pipeline in Casanare on Friday 22nd February. The OCENSA pipeline transports BP's oil from wells in the eastern Andes to the Caribbean port of Coveñas.

The paramilitary group AUC (United Self-Defence of Colombia) kept Gilberto shackled to a hole in the ground, covered with barbed wire. They finally handed him over to a special commission, comprising the International Red Cross, the Presidential Peace Commissioner and the People's Defender.

Gilberto's disappearance had triggered a national strike by USO that originally lasted several days, and was restarted on 20th March after another USO leader, Rafael James was assassinated in Barrancabermeja. USO's stoppage only ended last Saturday when the union heard of Gilberto's impending release.

Union leaders spent last week in negotiations with the top executives of state oil corporation ECOPETROL, demanding that management do more to protect the oil workers. Union President, Hernando Hernández pledged USO to fight on to defend the human rights of its members.

The Colombia Solidarity Campaign mounted two pickets of the Colombian Embassy in London, demanding Gilberto's release. The TUC, FBU, UNISON and many other unions and individuals have sent messages of protest. To our knowledge, this is the first time that the paramilitaries have released an abducted trade unionist. It is a great victory, primarily for the solidarity of the Colombian oil workers who took immediate and united militant action, as well as those of you in the international community who responded to the call to take urgent action.

We celebrate this victory with USO, and with them, we fight on.

## COLOMBIA

### FROM PREVIOUS PAGE

outstanding in his constant struggle to defend economic, social and cultural rights in his region.

In rejection of this political murder SINTRAUNICOL's national leadership called a national stoppage on Thursday 18th April, stopping all work in the country's public universities. Beside Tito's assassination, **Gilberto Agudelo Martinez**, the union's National President, was disappeared in April 2000. The work stoppage is for this barbarity against trade union leaders to stop, and that Gilberto Agudelo reappear safe and sound, and that those intellectually and materially responsible for his disappearance be captured and put on trial for their crimes in violation of fundamental rights.

### ASSASSINATION ATTEMPT

On 16th April 2002 in the city of Cartagena, Bolivar Department, the Electricity Workers Union of Colombia SINRAELECOL - CUT carried out a peaceful protest in front of the headquarters building of the Bolivar Electricity Corporation. The guards used their firearms, leaving wounded our comrades **Gaspar Guzman**, a member of the National Claims Commission and Ruben Castro Quintana, President of the union's Bolivar branch.

Note that incidents of this nature against the physical well being of the workers are in clear violation of the freedom to protest, and gave rise to an even more serious situation for the comrades' security, given that they are now being threatened by the AUC paramilitary groups in the region, and they do not have state protection measures. Hence, there are no guarantees for them in the exercise of their trade union activity.

### KIDNAPPING

On 6th April 2002, **Miguel Angel Rendon Graciano** was kidnapped on the way from the town of Itsmina to the city of Quibdo, in Choco Department. The comrade is the Vice-President of the Choco Branch of the Sena Public Workers Union SINDESENA-CUT.

We call for **urgent action** to save the life of our comrade, that he be returned as soon as possible safe and sound to his family and trade union. With all due respect, we consider that Doctor Juan Somaviva, the governments, employers and workers with representation and responsibility at the International Labour Organisation - ILO - must now take careful note of this **genocide** that is being carried out against the United Workers federation of Colombia - the CUT.

Since the Colombian Government with President Pastrana at its head does **not** implement the policies necessary for us to carry out our union activity, then a **commission of enquiry** must be agreed at the June 2002 meeting of the ILO Council of Administration. This would be a mechanism to call the attention of the Colombian State and Government to halt this genocide against our federation, and the systematic, massive and serious violation of human rights. This has so far this year left 52 assassinated, eight attempted assassinations, four kidnappings and six disappearances.

## GLOBAL POVERTY

# Financing

MARCH's financing for development conference in Monterrey, Mexico was a huge letdown for the world's poorest people, but did deliver on one front: it has helped to put poverty, albeit momentarily, higher up the political agenda, that said, the conference apparently failed to engage the mind of the man who has rightly claimed that political will is the main obstacle to ending poverty.

The non-appearance of Gordon Brown must be seen as an embarrassment all round. Despite Brown's pronouncements on tackling global poverty and doubling aid flows, he changed his plans at the last minute - leaving Treasury officials who had spent months preparing for the conference fuming. It is difficult to see how, as the chief Western proponent of greater financing for development, he could conceivably miss the one conference that there has ever been with that precise title. Can we expect him to make up for it in his forthcoming Comprehensive Spending Review?

New money was pledged, but nowhere near enough. And the promise of that new money is riven with conditionality. In particular, the conditions attached to the new aid that the United States is offering means it is doubtful that the money will be directed to where it is most needed.

Before the Monterrey conference opened, George Bush announced that the US would give \$5 billion between 2004 and 2006, but said the money would be dependent on evidence of recipient countries' willingness to undertake economic reform. The money would "reward countries with open markets and encourage private enterprise". U2 lead singer and anti-debt campaigner, Bono, stood alongside Bush at his Inter-American Development Bank speech: attracting criticism from some NGOs for whom non-conditional aid is non-negotiable.

When the European Union announced, thanks in large measure to Gordon Brown himself, that it would be pledging \$7 billion per year extra, equivalent to 0.39 per cent of GDP, the US issued a 'clarification' to its original announcement. This amounted to more money: £9.9 billion between 2004 and 2006 rather than \$5 billion, \$1.6 billion in 2004, \$3.3 billion in 2005, and then \$5 billion per annum thereafter.

Whether this was evidence of Bush feeling the pressure from the EU or, more likely, a PR stunt to give the impression that he had seen the light, we don't know. But the US 'clarification' still leaves the US floundering at the bottom of the aid league table: even taking into account the extra money, the US will be contributing less than 0.2 per cent of GDP to international aid. Furthermore, \$5 billion per year from 2006 onwards will quickly be eroded in real terms as the US economy grows and inflation rises.

The fact that US aid will be tied to economic reform means that the new money is most likely to go to middle income

# for development



WHITE HOUSE/TINA HAGE

**U2** lead singer and anti-debt campaigner Bono stood alongside Bush at his Inter-American Development Bank speech, attracting criticism from some NGOs for whom non-conditional aid is non-negotiable. Accompanying the President from left to right are Bono; Cardinal McCarrick, Archbishop of Washington; and World Bank President Jim Wolfensohn.

economies that already do business with the US or are in a position to start doing business. Furthermore, the US rules out its aid going to any countries that are unstable or having problems of governance – these are often the countries that need help most. The new US aid, it seems, is a tool for US economic policy, rather than straightforward US foreign policy, as it has been in the past.

Essentially, Monterrey has been a failure of multilateralism. The US has been unwilling to accept the true consensus that is needed to end poverty: namely, countries working together for global action and redistribution in favour of the poor. Until Bush's appearance in Mexico, the US played a purely negative role in the preparatory negotiations for the conference.

Monterrey has also been a failure of process. The long, drawn out and often bloody negotiations underline the fact that many countries do not have the stomach for taking the sacrifices necessary for beginning to end poverty. The US in particular has confirmed fears that, far from being a consensual nation in inter-

national fora, it is an obstacle to joint agreements, acting as spoiler and wrecker.

On the plus side, the Tobin tax was the source of considerable interest, with the German government launching a report saying the tax is both feasible and desirable. It is also generally welcome that Monterrey has focused the minds and brought poverty higher up the international agenda. But the Bush's \$5 billion must be seen in the context of the extra \$48 billion it has pledged for defence spending.

However, there is something to be said for Bush's presence at the conference. By turning up on the last day to make a ten-minute speech before disappearing to negotiate free trade agreements with various Central American leaders, Bush could be accused of using the summit as part of a promotional tour for US business interests. But at least he turned up.

**Steve Tibbett**  
Senior Campaigner, War on Want

## CHARITY

# Let's back this

**Mike Fordham**  
**Assistant General Secretary**

THE Union's Executive Council have recently agreed to give formal support to the charity RAFT and will be making an annual donation as well as giving space in Firefighter and on the website.

Our Union has a long and proud history of assisting charities and RAFT is a good example of a charity which carries out important work for all members of society but which through its work on burns carries special resonance with our membership. This is shown by the large number of our members who already contribute to the work of RAFT at station and Brigade level.

We have worked informally with RAFT over a number of years and been lucky enough to have met with some of the people involved. They need our support, please take the time to read the following letter:

**“** My name is Sasha – I am a burn survivor. I owe a great deal to the firefighters in New York who saved my life when I was caught in a car fire about two years ago. My life is forever changed – but I will never forget those who rescued me and who continue to befriend me and my family – especially, the New York Firefighters Center Foundation which is a very unique organisation that supports the Cornell Burn Center in Manhattan. What a special place.

I am in London now, still recovering, and wanted to donate time and energy to helping a similar cause here. I heard about RAFT and its wonderful work from the firefighters at Kensington Fire House (you call it Station, I believe!) and I am now volunteering with this burns research charity to raise awareness and, of course, much needed funds.

I have such respect for all of you firefighters out there – each day you risk your life to rescue those trapped by fire or other accidents – that makes you all very special indeed.

I also have respect for the reconstructive plastic surgeons who use their skills and expertise to help restore the damage inflicted by fire.

And now that I know about RAFT and its important research, I also have respect for the research surgeons and scientists who strive continuously to discover new treatments and solutions to medical problems.

Here at RAFT a combination of surgeons and scientists work together in the clinical setting and in the laboratory to advance knowledge and bring improvements speedily from the laboratory bench to the patient on the operating table.



**Fundraising at Kensington Fire Station in London**

## DO YOU KNOW WHAT RAFT MEANS?

it is actually an acronym standing for the Restoration of Appearance and Function Trust.

## DO YOU KNOW WHAT RAFT DOES?

Well it does just that – its research is geared at helping to restore the function and appearance of those whose lives have been devastated by burns and also by accidents, trauma, or have had major surgery to remove cancers or are born with a birth defect. There is a great programme of research in hand – research truly geared at helping people, helping to restore the quality of life for patients.

People so often think that plastic surgery is about film stars, face-lifts and boobjobs! This is far from the truth. The importance of plastic surgery as an essential life-saving medical speciality cannot be overstated. Plastic surgery gives real hope, not just of survival, but of a quality of life worth living. Research is the only way of ensuring that the speciality of reconstructive plastic surgery accelerates towards a future where patients maybe made whole again without fear of disfigurement.

And believe me I know from experience. Quite simply I doubt whether I could be here today if the surgeons did not have the skills and expertise they currently possess. However, I bear the scars from my burns – both physically and psychologically they will be with me for life. RAFT is working on a major research programme in an attempt to reduce or eliminate this type of scarring. For all the burn patients, and indeed for me, I desperately want them to succeed,

Dare I ask you to help me support such an amazing cause and dedicated team of people? Yes I do dare because it is so important to me and to the thousands of burn patients who will benefit. What can you do? Well here are a few suggestions:

# charity

- Give a one-off donation (under the Gift Aid Scheme, of course, so the charity can benefit by claiming back the tax)
- Make a regular payroll contribution (which is doubly beneficial as the Government makes a contribution matching your donation)
- Arrange a fundraising event at your Fire House (oops Station) – let us know and we will help where we can, but we can help with literature, posters etc
- Challenge your neighbouring Fire Station to a 'sponsored duel' of some kind.

Do you know that for just £2 per week (the price of a pint of beer!) you could enable some of these:

- £10 would help study the behaviour of abnormal burn scar cells
- £30 would buy the special culture flasks for growing skin cells for badly burned and cancer patients
- £100 would allow us to grow skin cells for burned patients for grafting

All of these and a lot more would help take the research forward so that patients can benefit from improved medical treatment.

Would you like to know more about RAFT? Well, give us a ring and we will happily arrange to come and talk to you and your colleagues. Or perhaps you might care to come and meet with our team of scientists here at RAFT.

Please do think about how you could help. You see the damage that fire wrecks – the lives that are devastated, together we make a good team, with your help we could do even better.

Thank you from my heart for taking the time to read this important message, you can help make a difference.

“  
Sasha

The Executive Council will be working with RAFT to progress our links and events will be arranged at Brigade and Regional level to allow members and officials to learn more of the tremendous work being earned out and the need to raise funds for more research. More important is what we do and we will be launching later this year the Gift Aid Scheme and Give As You Earn scheme that Sasha refers to.

If you wish to contact RAFT details are below:  
RAFT, Leopold Muller Building, Mount Vernon Hospital,  
Northwood, Middlesex HA6 2RN  
Tel: (01923) 835815 (01923) 844017 Fax: (01923) 844031  
Internet: <http://www.raft.ac.uk> E-mail: [charity@raft.ac.uk](mailto:charity@raft.ac.uk)

## INTERNATIONAL FIREFIGHTERS REMEMBRANCE DAY

Dear Andy,

Thank you for your letter dated 8th February 2002 in respect of the above matter.

I welcome and appreciate your support for this Remembrance Day for all firefighters who have given their lives whilst carrying out their duties. This will be a global event and will recognise no boundaries in relation to the firefighters who are remembered on such a day.

This years event will take place on the 8th September; it will be based on previous years services, but will recognise that it has become International. It is planned to move to St. Paul's Cathedral in 2003 by which time the memorial should include the names of all United Kingdom firefighters who have been killed in the course of their duties since the War. The memorial will also recognise the sacrifice of firefighters throughout the world.

I will keep you informed in respect of developments.

Thanks once again for your help and support.

**GRAHAM MELDRUM**  
HM Chief Inspector of Fire Services

## CONTINUING RELEVANCE OF AN EFFECTIVE UNION

Dear Firefighter,

This is a belated message of thanks on behalf of myself and my family to the Union, especially Joe MacVeigh and Mick Shergold for negotiations undertaken on my behalf for the position of Non-operational Firefighter at Western Command Staff.

This came as a complete surprise to us after a disappointing year and has reinforced the continuing relevance of a strong and effective Union.

**Grant Williams**  
Western Command Staff, Wembley

## IMPOSSIBLE PEOPLE INVESTMENT

Dear Firefighter,

The view of Victorian firemen and officers standing proud and aloof, may seem archaic and left in bygone days, but that image

## LETTERS

IAN JACOBS PHOTOGRAPHY



## CUBA SOLIDARITY OPEN OFFICE IN FBU PREMISES

Dear Firefighter,

Thanks to the generosity of the FBU the Scottish Cuba Solidarity Campaign now has an office in Glasgow city centre in space made available by the union.

The new SCSC premises were formally opened by Luis Marron of Cuba's Institute for Friendship with the Peoples during a recent visit to Scotland (above).

The office will provide a focal point for SCSC's work in support of Cuba and act as a base for their recently appointed development worker.

The support of the Scottish Labour Movement for the gains

made by the people of Cuba was also recently underlined by a resolution agreed by the STUC's Annual Conference. Moved by the FBU and seconded by bank workers union UNIFI it called for an end to the US blockade, respect for Cuba's independence and an end to foreign interference in Cuba's affairs.

Scotland's parliamentarians have also backed Cuba with the formation of a cross party group on Cuba at the Edinburgh Parliament supported by MSPs from the Labour, Tory, Lib Dem, Green, Scottish Socialist and Scottish National parties.

**Ken Ferguson**  
Development Worker, Scottish Cuba solidarity Campaign

and the inherent attitude is still here, despite the aim of achieving the modern business-world image of "team work".

The old-fashioned style of discipline evolved around educated and therefore superior officers and uneducated therefore undisciplined workers.

The strange impression that education and intelligence belongs in the ranks of the superiors still prevails today, and anyone below the rank of Sub.O who has more knowledge/education than a tradesman is considered with serious suspicion. The fear that an educated/knowledgeable subordinate might be able to identify fault in a superior brings many officers to apply the Victorian style of discipline i.e. the subordinate has no right to question an order until the task is completed, after which it doesn't matter, their views are of no consequence as we are doing something else now.

Anyone who has been temporary Lff on their own Watch will understand how a person will have to adapt their behaviour to

the role. But haven't they been selected for this role because they have the required knowledge and personality? So, should they have to adapt, or should they be themselves in this modern world.

The modern image of a successful organisation be it business or committee/service based, is for a relaxed, co-operative but efficient and hard working team. This cannot exist in the present management style of our Fire Service, because of its inherent views and the conflict it creates for any temporary or progressive rank, in which the subordinate is submissive to superiors, but suppressive to lesser subordinates (to reduce competition).

Within the Union structure, there is an impression of teamwork; this helps to create a knowledgeable, relaxed, co-operative and efficient team, if ever an example were needed!

**Steve Keane**  
Branch Secretary Eccles GMC No5 Region

# CUBAN WORKERS SEND GREETINGS, GRATITUDE

Dear Brother Andy,

I hope that when this reaches you it may find you and all our Brothers and Sisters at the Fire Brigades Union enjoying good health and as usual devoted to the defence of the workers whom you so highly represent.

My first reflection about the recent trip of our delegation to the UK, on the occasion of the celebration of the CSC Conference, relates to our profound gratitude to the Fire Brigades Union for the historical support, contribution and solidarity provided to Cuba and to its Trade Union and Labour Movements. We also appreciate your active participation during the celebration of the Solidarity Conference and the extraordinary material support given to the "Health for Cuba Project".

The contributions made by your Union to the celebration of the Conference held on October 27th and the invitation extended to our delegation for attending the Conference and to meet with your Union, were far beyond any expectation and was really an example of brotherhood, comradeship and solidarity.

The CTC our 19 national Branch Unions, our Secretary General comrade Pedro Ross and the more than 3.2 million Cuban affiliated workers would like to express our commitment to work together with the Fire Brigades Union in our efforts forging a long-standing, strong and unmovable bond of friendship, co-operation and solidarity.

Once again our deepest gratitude and recognition.

**Francisco Duran Harvey, Deputy Secretary  
General Cuban Workers' Trade Union Central CTC**

## GULF WAR SYNDROME APPEAL TO UNIONS

Dear Firefighter,

I would like to take up a few minutes of your time to request your help as a Trade Union.

I am writing to you at this time as a disabled veteran of the Gulf Conflict who is a part-time postman/Communication Workers Union member that suffers with Gulf War Illness.

May I draw your attention to the attached document. This attachment is aimed at attracting the attention of all veterans/civilian workers and contractors that helped or served in the Gulf Conflict. It is my intention to write to every Trade Union in the United Kingdom to ask if they would be willing to consider entering the enclosure into their Trade Union magazine.

It is quite clear that some of your members may have previously served or worked in the 1990-91 Gulf War. Some of these members may be experiencing sickness/ill-health or suffer

with psychological trauma/illness, debt, stress or hardship. I would like these persons to know that they are not alone and that there is help available from our Association.

**Justin Harvey  
Political Officer NGV+FA**

## ATTENTION

Did you serve in HM Forces or were you a civilian worker/support staff or contractor

in the 1990-91 Gulf War?

Are you sick or disabled from your war time experiences in the 1990-91 Gulf War?

Do you have a sick relative/friend or do you know someone that is ill and they took part in the 1990-91 Gulf War?

If you can answer YES to any of the above questions then please get in touch with the following:

National Gulf Veterans & Families Association

Registered as

The MM National Gulf Veterans & Families Benevolent Association

Charity No 1074867

Patron: Rt. Hon Earl Kitchener of Khartoum TD DL  
Offices 53/54, The Pavilion, 536 Hall Road,  
HULL HU6 9BS

Telephone 01482 808730 Fax 01482 808731  
[www.ngvfa.com](http://www.ngvfa.com) or Email – [ngvfa@aol.com](mailto:ngvfa@aol.com)

The NGV+FA is a registered charity and association run by veterans for veterans and their families.

**IF YOU NEED US WE ARE HERE FOR YOU!**

## LETTERS

# SINCERE THANKS TO DEVON OFFICIALS

Dear Firefighter,

Two years ago I had cause to enter into a formal grievance against an officer for unacceptable behaviour. Having rejected the Divisional Commander's decision, I proceeded with my grievance to the CFO, who found in my favour. Unfortunately, the Chief was slow in acting on his own decision and I had no option but to take the grievance to a full meeting of the Fire Authority for a conclusion, they in turn supported the Chief's findings and directed action be taken.

Through Firefighter, my wife and I would like to give our sincere thanks to the Devon Officials, Gary Jones and Chris Blower and Berni Beachgood and Brian Joyce, whose support and advice enabled us to get through an extremely stressful 18 months.

Peter Armitage  
OOT Member

# PUBLIC HOLIDAYS ARE NOT A RIGHT IN PRIVATE SECTOR

Dear Firefighter,

I found the article "Welcome for new employment rights" – TUC

**TUC**

**TUC Education Online**

Already more than 30,000 union reps learn through TUC Education each year.

If you are a union rep, a health and safety rep or a learning rep you can now take a TUC course and work wholly or partly on-line to access the same accredited courses available in the classroom.

The online courses use the same high quality materials, the same tutor support, the same networking with other union reps, and the same units of credit.

Being on-line the courses can be followed from work, learning centres or home.

**Further information and an application form can be found at [learningqservices.org.uk/onlinecourses](http://learningqservices.org.uk/onlinecourses)**

Or contact: Jackie Williams  
(020 7467 1253 email [jwilliams@tuc.org.uk](mailto:jwilliams@tuc.org.uk))  
TUC Organisation and Services Department



Mail (Jan/Feb 02 issue), very interesting. Having been in the Service for 28 years I took public holidays as a right, but now in a civilian job I've found they are not a right, but a privilege from the employer (according to ACAS).

My present employment terms are to count bank holiday breaks towards four weeks annual leave. I think this a mean act by the employer – thus reducing the 20 day entitlement by eight days in effect. (This matter should be treated with the utmost urgency). I endorse the TUC campaign for better holiday rights and wish them every success. Perhaps my views could be passed on to the TUC.

I look forward to many more years of being an OOT member and receiving the *Firefighter* and thank you for all your past help.

**RICHARD HAWKINS**  
OOT Member

**ON THE MOVE?**

**Members are reminded to advise their Brigade Membership Secretary of any change of address. Head Office should be advised of any changes of next of kin or nominations for benefits.**



# Fire Brigades Union

## EDUCATION SCHOOLS 2002

### Branch Officials

#### school

**Glasgow**

**5–7 March**

### Annual Women's School

**Sheffield**

**8–10 March**

### Branch Officials School

**Belfast**

**22–24 March**

### Branch Officials School

**Sheffield**

**9–11 April**

### Branch Officials Fairness at Work School

**London**

**19–21 April**

### Branch Officials Health & Safety School

**Eastbourne**

**29 April–1 May**

### Branch Officials School

**London**

**28–30 May**

### Branch Officials School

**Bristol**

**7–9 June**

### Branch Officials Fairness at Work School

**Sheffield**

**25–27 June**

- Creche facilities available
- All reasonable expenses will be met
- Application forms are available from Brigade Officials
- Apply online at [www.fbu.org.uk/education](http://www.fbu.org.uk/education)
- Completed forms should be sent to your Regional Secretary

**Branch Officials Health & Safety School**  
**Cumbria**  
**20–22 September**

**Branch Officials Political School**  
**Sheffield**  
**27–29 September**

**Annual BAEMM School**  
**Sheffield**  
**11–13 October**

**NATIONAL SCHOOL**  
**Sheffield**  
**2–8 November**

**Annual Gay and Lesbian School**  
**Sheffield**  
**20–22 October**



**Education**

# 25 YEAR BADGES



A. Clark, Strathclyde Fire Brigade, receives her 25 year badge from Sandy McNiven.



Alan Henshaw, Chester Branch, receives his 25 year badge from Chris Rodaway.



Alfie Hynds, Speedwell Avon, receives his 25 year badge from Kevin Herniman.



Bob Davies from Cardiff Central receives his 25 year badge from Dominic Stokes.



Cliff Wilkinson, Cumbria, receives his 25 year badge from Steve Hunter.



Dave Edwards, Cheltenham, Gloucester, receives his 25 year badge from John Drake.



Dick Flanary, Guisborough Unit, Cleveland Fire Brigade, receives his 25 year badge from David Atkinson.



Dave Ivey, Dartford Branch, receives his 25 year badge from Steve Rogers.



Dave Wallace, Perth Branch, Tayside, receives his 25 year badge from Willie Grierson.



Dave Pickard, Guisborough Unit, Cleveland Brigade, receives his 25 year badge from Steve Watson and Mick Jones.



George Combe, North Berwick Unit, Lothian & Borders Fire Brigade, receives his 25 year badge from David Kerr.



Eddie Henderson, Marionville Fire Station, Lothian and Borders Brigade, receives his 25 year badge from Graeme Birtley.



Gary Barson, South Yorkshire, receives his 25 year badge from P. Eyre.



Gordon Dow, Perth Branch, Tayside, receives his 25 year badge from Willie Grierson.



Dave McArthur, Chester Branch, receives his 25 year badge from Nick Gough.



Ian Edwards, Wimbledon, receives his 25 year badge from Jim Fitzpatrick.



Joan Galashan, Grampian Fire Brigade, receives her 25 year badge from Jennifer Leslie, Joanne Smith and Jillian Murray.



John Lord, Chester Branch, receives his 25 year badge from Nick Gough.



L. Kemp, Strathclyde Fire Brigade, receives her 25 year badge from Sandy McNiven.



Paul Armistead, St Annes, Lancashire, receives his 25 year badge from Earl Smith.



Phil Brannon, Hemel Hempstead Fire Station, receives his 25 year badge from Paul Stephenson.



Paul Gardner, Erith Fire Station, receives his 25 year badge from Mick Horne.



Rick Hodge from Tunbridge Wells Kent receives his 25 year badge from Bob Fitzgerald.



Stewart Nelson, Perth Branch, Tayside, receives his 25 year badge from Willie Grierson.



Keith McIntosh, Perth Branch, Tayside, receives his 25 year badge from Willie Grierson.



Paul Woods, Hemel Hempstead, receives his 25 year badge from Paul Stephenson.



Robert Mitchell from Northland Fire Station, Londonderry, receives his 25 year badge from Martin Roddy.



Russ Parker of Roedean Fire Station, receives his 25 year badge from Jim Parrott.



Simon Crick, Whitechapel Branch, receives his 25 year badge from Les Reid.



Steve Hunter, Cumbria Brigade, receives his 25 year badge from Davie Patton.



Shaun Morrissey, Ellesmere Port Branch, Cheshire, receives his 25 year badge from Dave Doneo.



Professionals get  
professional **pay...**  
so we're demanding **£30K**



Because we're **worth it!**

Pay parity means:

- **£30K** for Emergency Fire Control Staff & Firefighters;
- A **£7,500** retainer, and **£13.74** for every hour worked by Firefighters on the Retained duty system.